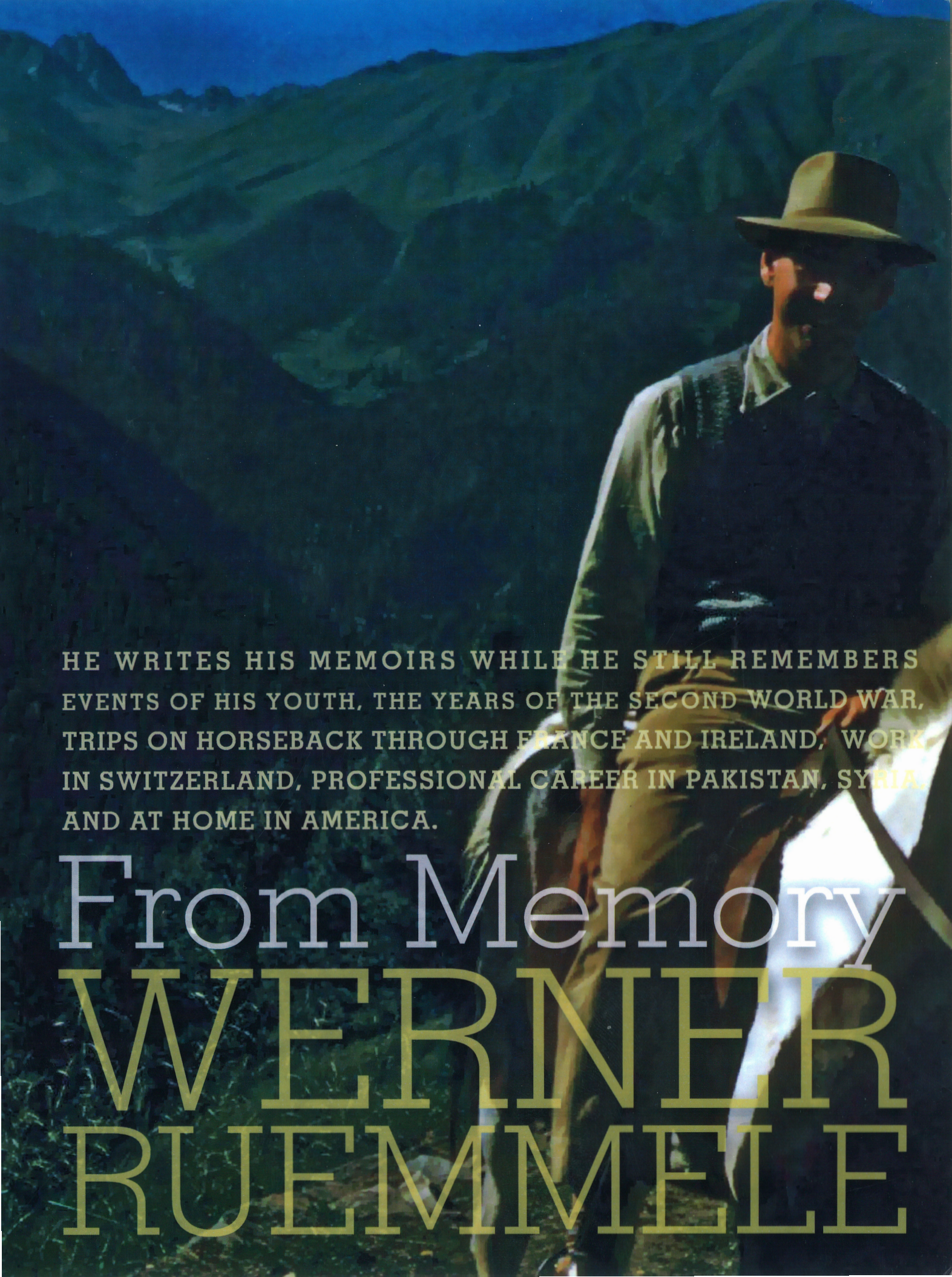


A man wearing a fedora-style hat, a dark vest over a light-colored shirt, and light-colored trousers stands in a mountainous landscape. He is holding a long, thin object, possibly a walking stick or a rifle, which is partially visible. The background consists of steep, rocky mountains under a clear blue sky. The lighting suggests it might be late afternoon or early morning, with some shadows on the man's face and clothing.

HE WRITES HIS MEMOIRS WHILE HE STILL REMEMBERS
EVENTS OF HIS YOUTH, THE YEARS OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR,
TRIPS ON HORSEBACK THROUGH FRANCE AND IRELAND, WORK
IN SWITZERLAND, PROFESSIONAL CAREER IN PAKISTAN, SYRIA,
AND AT HOME IN AMERICA.

From Memory
**WERNER
RUEMMELE**



Water from one of our deep-wells flows into the dry land around Jaranwala,
West Punjab, Pakistan (see page 57)

The Memoirs of Werner Ruemmele

A work in progress, begun in 2005, continued 2009

Introduction

From Memory

I write these memoirs while I can still remember events of my youth, the years of the Second World War, single life, professional career, work in Switzerland and trips to Pakistan, Syria and the USA. I hope not to bore the reader with details. Construction and engineering is such an important part of my life that I cannot leave it out of these writings. Some readers may find it of great interest but I know it can be dull and useless to others who should just skip it. Consulting maps or Google Earth while reading will help to find places, follow travelled routes and see how some of the Interstate highways and dams I worked on look from the air.

Translated Reports and Letters

A large portion of these memoirs between 1951 and 1967 are translations of reports and letters (using italic font) I wrote to friends and family in Switzerland. These reports and letters (almost 200 pages) reflect my experiences and thoughts of the moment, as a young man. Riding on horseback through France and Ireland, working as a bachelor overseas and later traveling with my wife Romana to Pakistan, India, Syria and the USA, the reports are generally addressed to a Swiss audience of the 50's and 60's.

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Part One

Growing up in Allschwil, Switzerland

Father's Parents and Hearsay of the Past

My father's family originated in Germany's Zell-im-Wiesental, ten miles north of the Rhine River, where graveyard and telephone directory still shows many Rümmele's. The high point in the area, topped by a sightseeing tower is called "Rümmele Buehl" today. The river "Wiese" flows into the Rhine near Basle and the people in Zell speak a dialect not too different from the northwestern Swiss. I have not done much genealogy, but both my grandfather Albert's family name and my Grandmother Emma's maiden name were Rümmele. In those days, the Catholic Church would probably have demanded proof that they were not first cousins before they could marry. Among grandfather Albert's relatives was a distant cousin, Meinrad, who emigrated to the USA and built agricultural machinery and tractors under the brand name "Rumely" in Moline Iowa. His only brother Karl also emigrated to the USA and joined Meinrad's company. Albert was a cabinet maker and Emma's family had a brewery and tavern. It was rumored that Emma served as the bouncer in her father's tavern!

In the Middle Ages, names were written by the few who could write Latin, and the ending of names was typically ...lin. A town place, mill, creek and market in Basle are still called "Rümmelin Platz, Rümmelin Bach" etc. During the 30 year war following the Reformation, much of central Europe including the north (right) bank of the river Rhine from Constance to Basle was devastated by roaming armies and armed bands of marauders burning and pillaging every town and farm. Switzerland defended itself and was able to keep the destruction from crossing into its lands south of the river.

After the 30 year war, the local German ruler instituted a sort of "homestead" law. Any stranger who signed up with his land agents could claim abandoned homes, farms, mills or other property if he was willing to rebuild it and live there. This led many a Swiss, mostly second or third sons not entitled to inherit their own father's property, to cross the Rhine and claim what fit their trade best. Upon registering their property, their names were recorded in the then prevailing German manner ending in ...le, rather than in the Swiss manner ending in ...li. Thus we see many names of direct relatives on different banks of the upper Rhine spelled differently; Voegeli / Voegele, Nestli / Nestle, Schnebeli / Schnebele, and of course Rümmeli / Rümmele.



Rümmele Family: Albert (1886-1980) as a young man of 22 (on right) before he was married.



Grandparent Ruemmele's 50th Wedding Anniversary

Mother's Parents

My mother's father Camillo Broggi was born in 1862 in Albiolo Italy, a small town two miles south of the Swiss border, where he and his two brothers were orphaned at an early age. Two of them walked across the Alps at the Gotthard Pass before there was a tunnel and found work in Switzerland as bricklayer helpers. Camillo later became a master bricklayer and contractor in Berne and was about as well respected in the community as an Italian could be in those days. My grandmother Elisabeth Heller was born March 7, 1867 into a well established family from Kirchlindach near Berne. The Heller's owned a jewelry store in the city. Grandmother told my cousin Gretel later that when she first saw Camillo, he was the most handsome man she had ever seen, wearing an embroidered velvet vest and round velvet cap: the proverbial "tall, dark and handsome stranger". Genteel Bernese society of that time could not accept the marriage of a middle class daughter to a working class Italian and her father forbade it.

Well, Elisabeth married Camillo anyway, but they had to leave Berne. With her marriage to a foreigner she also lost her Swiss citizenship. They fled to Basle and settled near the French border post of Burgfelden in a part later nicknamed "Abessinien" because of its mostly Italian population. She and her children were shunned by her own parents and siblings for many decades, as long as her father lived. Only as an old woman, after Camillo had died in 1935, was she accepted as a burgher of Kirchlindach again and thus a Swiss citizen. Then her brothers and sisters answered her letters and once even visited her.

Camillo Broggi's building business was quite successful, building entire streets with rows of four story walk-up apartment blocks in the Gundeldinger and Hegenheimer sections of Basle. Remembering crossing the Gotthard Pass on foot as a boy remained with him to his old age and he liked to talk about that adventure. He never went back to Italy but remained an Italian citizen all his life. His two sons Franz and Seppi fought in the African Colonial wars in the 1930's as Italian soldiers.



Broggi Family 1907: Theresa is the youngest girl (far right)



Grandparents Broggi in 1925

As a young boy I knew all four grandparents and can still remember them well. The first to die was Camillo, then later Elisabeth, both in their late 70's. I also remember my grandfather Albert Rümmele working in a tea cutting and packaging plant "Lehner-Suer Company" near the Spalentor in Basle. He worked well past his eighties until he fell off a ladder carrying a sack of cut tea leaves and died a few days later as a consequence of this industrial accident. Emma Rümmele survived the other three and we visited her every Sunday afternoon at the Colmarer Strasse in Basle, walking both ways from Allschwil. She had a huge book of glued-together old weekly newspapers where we children looked at pictures and old ads by the hour while the adults talked.

My Father Albert Rümmele

He was the oldest of seven children and the only living son. Another son died in infancy. Born 1886 as a German citizen he did his compulsory three year military service in the guard regiment of Kaiser Wilhelm. They paraded in old style shiny helmets with pikes on top but already had gas masks and steel helmets of the modern style. Upon his honorable discharge from service in 1910 he was given a one-way train ticket from Berlin back to his hometown Zell. The German narrow gage rail line serving the Wiesental was only connected to the "Badischer Bahnhof", the German railroad station located on Swiss territory in Basle. So, to go home from Berlin to Zell he had to travel to Basle, change trains there and continue the ride home. From what he told me, he "knew" there was going to be a war, and he wanted no part of it. He had enough of "officers wearing two rows of shiny buttons" and would not take it anymore. So he just got off the Berlin train at Basle but never got onto the train to Zell. Instead he wrote a letter to his parents and they came to visit him in Switzerland from time to time. Before the First World War broke out they also moved to Basle.

With his discharge papers, he was also given a booklet titled: "Dich ruft Suedwest!" (Southwest Africa is calling you!). It described in glowing terms the great future awaiting young colonists in that German colony (now Namibia). He may have never read it but as a young boy I found it somewhere in the attic and read it with great interest. In my vivid imagination I saw a life of adventure in that German colony that had ceased to exist a quarter century earlier.

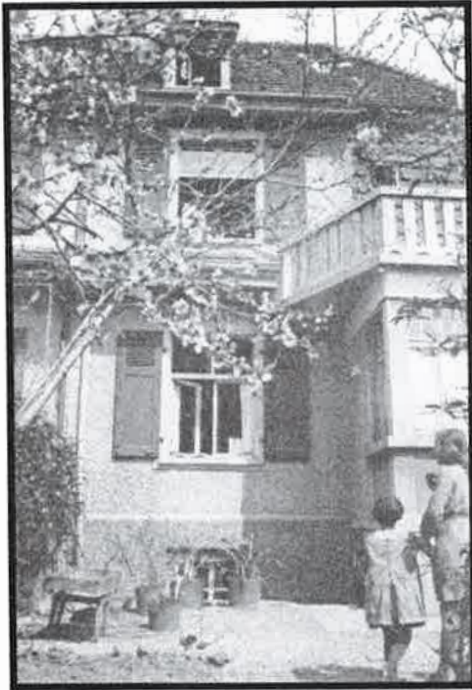
Dad settled in the village Stein Aargau on the south bank of the Rhine and worked many trades. At the time, linoleum floor covering was the latest trend in interior fashion. So he caught that trend and worked some years as a linoleum installer. Through evening studies he also learned accounting and other office skills. If a Swiss town or city elects a person as a "burgher" he is then automatically accepted as a Swiss national. So he became a Swiss citizen in Stein Aargau. Later he moved to Basle and was made a "burgher" of that city as well. In 1914 when the war broke out, all members of his former guard regiment "volunteered" and were sent to one of the fronts. Who knows how many of those 28 year olds survived the four years of World War One.

In his younger years my father was a gymnast and a track-and-field athlete. He smoked pipe as far back as I can remember and sometimes cheap cigars. His social life was the bicycle club, the rabbit breeders club and later the motorcycle club. Most nights he worked as a bookkeeper for the clubs or moonlighted for a paying customer. When he was in our basement working he always sang old songs. He must have known several hundreds of them and I still remember a few. Harmonica was the only instrument he played.

My Mother Therese Broggi

Camillo Broggi had moved his building business to Allschwil, a suburb of Basle, and partnered with the Apiani brothers. The Broggi's had two sons and five daughters. Therese born October 20th 1897 was the youngest. The partnership needed a bookkeeper and Albert Rümmele was doing just that kind of evening work on the side, while holding a full time clerical job at the Dairymens Cooperative. He worked for them and the youngest daughter caught his eye. Therese was working as a sales clerk for a Jewish photographer "Frommer" in the city. She liked to tell us lots of funny stories of those days and always quoted her boss, Mr. Frommer saying "...Was me hat', hat' me!" (... What you've got, you've got!)

They married and had two children, my sister Wally (Valerie) in 1926 and me on July 10th 1929. We lived in townhouses Camillo had built earlier and retained through the depression, first on Neptunstrasse 24, then Schuetzenweg 76 until about 1947. Her sisters Marie and Anna never married but lived with their parents in the home on Lerchenweg 10. Every Sunday after church we would go to grandmother Broggi's house and always have risotto and a roast for lunch before walking to grandmother Rümmele's home in Basle. After grandmother Broggi died, we moved to Lerchenweg 10 and Marie and Anna became a part of our household. The two mansard rooms were the bedrooms for me and my sister. A small washbasin was installed in the attic hall. During winter the only faucet was sometimes frozen in the morning. We had no hot water up there, but could get hot water from the kitchen or from the upstairs bathroom if we lit the gas heater and waited.



Backyard of 10 Lerchenweg

Valerie and cousin Gretel

How Far Back Can Children Remember?

One time after eating Sunday lunch at grandparent Broggi's place, I hit my head hard at the corner of the table while running around it. I must have cried loudly, because grandfather called to his son Seppi to go to the basement and get a saw. With saw in hand he scolded the corner of the table for hitting my head. It stopped my crying as I heard him make the noise of a saw cutting wood. I must have been about two years old. I also remember a neighbor's dog running away from his chain one evening as it was already getting dark and all the boys running after him to catch him before he reached the forest about a mile away. My friend's older brother boasted loudly, "I will catch that dog if it takes me all night!" I must have been one of the younger boys at about three years of age. My father came after me with his bicycle to bring me home. He had a little saddle between his saddle and the handles to let me sit on.



Grandfather Camillo with me on his lap and Valerie standing

Kindergarten was on the Langen Lohn Strasse in Basle, just a block to walk. There were three classes, the little, the middle and the big children. We had to wear slippers inside and the big class had to help the others take their street shoes off and put them back on again to go home. Only after the last little and middle kid was "shod" could the big kids begin to put their own shoes on. We learned a few things like, left and right, the numbers to ten, reading the clock and maybe the letters of our own names? Playing marbles was important to us. We carried a sack of marbles wherever we went, and traded glazed clay marbles for glassy "English" marbles on a ratio of one to ten, or big glassies worth even more. Trading required counting and calculating. Older kids tried to dupe the younger ones who could not yet count. Hopscotch was another game we played right in the street, without fear of cars.

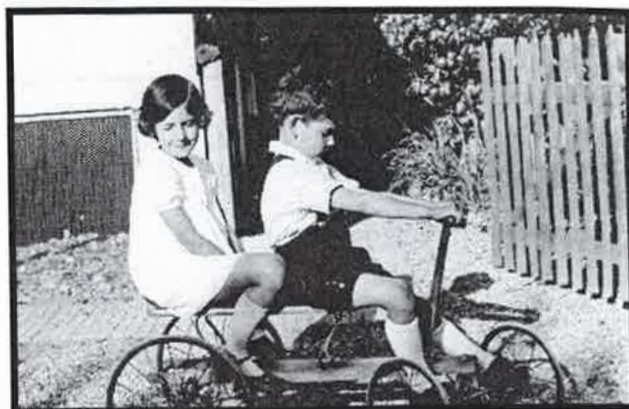


Grandfather Camillo Broggi and my Sister

I don't remember much else, except for a girl a bit older than me who always kissed me. That annoyed me so much that whenever possible I tried to sneak into or out of Kindergarten without encountering her. My buddies were Heini Müller and Sigi Fraenkel. We roller skated together, made "tents" out of bed sheets in the backyard and slept there part of the summer nights until it got too cold or too scary, then we went back into our adjacent homes. In winter we screwed ice skates to our heavy boots and played ice hockey, inspired by the national games reported blow by blow on the radio. Both the Rümmele and the Broggi families loved singing. I can not remember any family get-together when we did not sing for at least an hour. During winter there were many community events, parish parties, scout events, clubs' annual meetings were people got together to watch amateur theater, eat, drink and join in sing-alongs.

Elementary School Years

Four years of elementary school was spent in Neuallschwil, an easy 15 minute walk from home. The first two years we had women teachers and were allowed to speak Swiss dialect as the teacher gradually changed over to high-German. The next two years we had men as teachers. Corporal punishment meant being hit with a ruler or cane on the hand or buttocks, and I got my fair share of that. Classes were gender separated. I liked school and probably did all right, but can not remember much. We scratched letters and numbers on slate boards and erased them with a wet sponge. The slate boards had wooden frames, and every Monday morning we had to show the teacher that the frames were scrubbed clean and white. All shoelaces were black and when one broke, we knotted the broken ends together to last a few more months. If one was completely useless we replaced it but not its companion on the other shoe. That would be wasteful.



Childhood



As we progressed through arithmetic, fractions and decimal fractions came up in the third grade. The teacher asked the class what these fractions are used for and got the usual answers like: "one half loaf of bread" or "one tenth of a franc" but he wanted something else. Finally some pupil said "interest", what dad pays for the house at the end of each month, or what we get on our savings book every year. That brought a long explanation of interest with a lecture on its dangers. We all had to write on our slate boards: "Interest, good if you take it, bad if you give it, always take it but never give it!" Then we paraded past the teacher who made sure we had written the message as told.

Our free time during elementary school years were spent in the Allschwiler Wald forest or the Bachgraben creek, where we played "Indians" and had feather caps and wooden tomahawks. It was not cowboys and Indians like in the USA but more along the lines of Karl May, a German writer of Wild West stories. Names like Winnetou and Tecumsee were well known to us kids. Because the books were written in high-German we reasoned that "Indians" would of course speak

that language and not our native Swiss-German. So we forced ourselves to talk high-German to each other as soon as we donned our feathered headgear.

Neuallschwil had no Catholic church. The hallway of the public school served for Sunday mass. As the parish grew, St. Therese Catholic Church was built. I learned to be an altar server, memorizing Latin prayers and responses. Initially it was just syllables strung together that we rattled off, not knowing what they meant. Only later when we learned French did some words become meaningful. The altar was tight up against the front wall of the sanctuary and the priest turned his back to the congregation while celebrating mass. Girls and women sat to the left of the center aisle while boys and men sat on the right. Families split up to observe that strange custom. Serving on Sundays was easy because we had to go to church anyway, but early morning weekday mass was quite a sacrifice.

Beginning of the Second World War

Switzerland never has a general during peace time, but in summer 1939, one day before Hitler attacked Poland, the Swiss parliament elected a general, Henry Guisan of French speaking Switzerland. It was assumed that he would be less German influenced than other high ranking officers who might have studied in Germany before the war. I was ten years old when the Second World War came to the Swiss border. The German fortress "Isteiner Klotz" faced the French "Ballon d'Alsace" across Basle and the Rhine valley. They shot heavy artillery at each other over Swiss territory and loud explosions could be heard in our hometown. Even the whistling of the projectiles through the air could be heard before their impact. It was quite an experience, especially at night when flames could also be seen. We had to write a composition in school about it. Boys made toy guns out of wood and played war. Everyone wanted to be the Finns and nobody the Russians. Playing "Indians" was over and never came back.

I was a very active Boy Scout. We were instructed to wear red armbands with the Swiss cross on it and go in groups of three to a dozen outlying farms along the French border from Allschwil past Schoenenbuch, handing out evacuation planning forms to the people. It was explained to us that if one got sick on the trail, the other two must carry or drag him back to "safety". This gave us boys a chance to walk right on the border-patrol footpaths. We always took binoculars with us and spied into France as far as we could. A week later we had to go and collect these forms, and finally after another two weeks deliver evacuation directions. In the event of an attack the government would broadcast an evacuation order over the radio. Then each family would have to flee inland and be "hosted" by a family in a town 15 miles away from the border. Fortunately that notice never came.

French colonial infantry from Senegal and cavalry from Morocco were stationed along the border ahead of the "impenetrable" Maginot Line, a chain of fortifications, bunkers and obstacles from the Swiss to the Belgian borders. Their officers would probably be mainland French, but I do not recall ever seeing one. I do remember the brown soldiers and their white horses from North Africa, and the black soldiers from Central Africa, the first black people I had ever seen. In their camps under cherry trees and in the woods they had fine furniture looted from abandoned towns and farms of their "own" nation, France!

Our next door neighbor Walter Aegerter worked in a factory in Basle and he was a Communist. He had a short wave radio and we would go to him most evenings to listen to the

BBC German language news from London. Their opening signal was the kettle drum beginning of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony: ding ding ding dong, ding ding ding dong. It is also the Morse letter "V": dot dot dot dash, for victory.

Another neighbor was Mr. Schneider, a German citizen and a known Nazi. He went regularly to the "Braunes Haus" (brown house) where the Nazis met. They reportedly wore their brown SA uniforms inside, but had to change when they came out into the streets because the Swiss authorities would not allow foreign uniforms worn in public. One time I had to take a porcelain plate my sister had painted to my grandmother. As I mounted my bike, Mr. Schneider came out of his house and slapped me a few times. I was concerned for the porcelain plate, so I carefully laid my bike down before I turned to push him away. By that time someone else appeared and Schneider went back into his house. With Schneider not being popular anyway, the other neighbors all urged my dad to take the Nazi to court and get an injunction against him. We went to court in Arlesheim and told our side of the story. Schneider claimed I had instigated his justified rage by whistling "Bist Du verrueckt mein Kind, reise nach Berlin wo die Verrueckten sind, da gehoerst Du hin!" (Are you crazy my child, travel to Berlin where the crazies are, that's where you belong!). The judge admonished Mr. Schneider to stay away from me, but in the hallway on our way out Schneider threatened to "get" me some other day.

A motorcycle friend of my father's, Mr. Tschopp was a Nazi sympathizer but he was a Swiss citizen and served in the army reserve. They had their own shooting "sports" club and their own dog training club with mostly German shepherd dogs. I remember him arguing with father and they did not see eye to eye on politics. As the war dragged on the Nazi clubs disappeared but maybe they just went underground, waiting for a German victory. Some of them surely took their dreams to the grave.

I had Jewish friends in school, and we also had three Jewish families as close neighbors. One man owned a pharmacy and the other two were bankers. When news stories appeared about re-settlement of German Jews into Eastern Europe, they were described as going to work camps. Everybody I knew was outraged and there was quite a bit in the paper about Jews being rounded up and shipped to work camps. Our communist neighbor said: "it won't hurt them to learn how to till the earth and work in the fields". It was just class warfare to him. I do not recall the BBC German language news ever telling the truth about the death camps. Only at the end of the war when these camps were liberated did the truth come out on the radio.

Outings and Vacation at the Müller's Cabin

Across the street lived the Müller family. Dr. Paul Müller was a chemical researcher for Geigy Co. It was customary in those days to call him "Doctor" even if he did not see you as a patient. Even stranger was the custom to call a woman who had married a doctor "Frau Doctor", regardless of her education or lack of it. Their oldest son Heini had been my buddy since our toddler days. We went to Kindergarten and elementary school together and spent most of our free time playing at our or their place or backyard. The Müllers owned a small cabin on the edge of the forest, the "Hüttli" (little hut) above Bennwil. Primitive at first but enlarged over the years, it was for both families our summer getaway.

We took the train to Liestal and the Reigoldswil bus up the valley. Then we hiked with backpacks for two hours up the hill to reach the cabin. It smelled of fresh cedar. Pines and firs

overhung its roof and the view over meadows and farmland extended all the way to Basle 15 miles away. For us children there was much to do and to explore, while the fathers worked on the cabin. The smoke of the wood stove brought us back for dinner, exhausted from running and hungry. A day hike took us to the Belchen Mountain. Every day we trekked down to the dairy cooperative in Bennwil for milk and other supplies and, like loaded mules, up the hill again.

Dr. Paul Müller had invented DDT while working as a researcher for his company, and was later awarded the Nobel Prize.

The War Years

There was strict rationing of everything, not just food but also clothing, leather, energy, restaurant meals. Gas for cars was not available to regular customers, only to emergency services. Practically no travel was allowed for tourism. Every town was ordered by the government to take in a set number of refugees and house and feed them. Switzerland sheltered an entire Polish army, many French troops, Jewish refugees and many escaped prisoners from all the neighboring axis countries. Most were housed in similar wooden barracks as the Swiss army. Everybody slept in bunks on canvas bags filled with straw. In all there were 300,000 foreign refugees, including 30,000 Jews in our surrounded country of 4.5 million people.

In an older school building was a detachment of about fifty Swiss border troops. For washing in the open, they had long water pipes with holes every two feet and a tin lined trough under it. Cold water was turned on and it squirted out of all those holes so that they could wash and shave. Then it was turned off again. They had a horse drawn field kitchen with 20 gallon soup kettles. We boys hung around to watch what they did. Often at the end of lunch, the cook called to us boys that there was still some food in the kettles. We ran and gobbled it up, not because we were really hungry, but it was a thrill to eat "with the soldiers". The specialty was "Spatz" (sparrow) which was of course not actual bird meat, but a nickname for boiled meat of old milk cows.

Most able bodied men were in the army. Others were in essential services like police, railroads or utilities. When a German invasion plan against Switzerland became known, the general ordered a preemptive retreat of the army into the "Reduit" (redoubt) in the Alps. This left the flatland and all big cities undefended, but the fortified Alps with hundreds of railroad and highway tunnels and bridges beyond the reach of German panzers. It must have been quite a psychological burden on the soldiers to leave their families behind without any attempt to defend them.

In town we had semi military "Luftschutz" (air raid protection) where my father served in the first-aid brigade, and "Ortswehr" (town protection) with old rifles and charged with maintaining order in an emergency. Fortunately that emergency never came. For the next four years, German spies tried to find out many times if the Swiss would really blow up all the traffic arteries across the Alps in case of an attack. The answer always was "yes". Hitler himself was also convinced of it. Unlike Britain, the USA or Russia, he had been to Switzerland in his younger years, knew the Alps and had a bad gut feeling about the Swiss. His hatred for us was shown clearly when he called us "diese verdammten Berg Semiten" (those damned mountain semites) because we speak different languages and are not racially "pure". I think it was the need for freight rail traffic through the Alps that saved Switzerland from being attacked. Gotthard and Loetschberg

Simplon routes through Switzerland were double track while Austria's Brenner still was only single track. The Axis could not risk losing four of five tracks across and through the Alps.

Tilling, Planting, Weeding and Harvesting

To grow more food became a matter of survival for surrounded Switzerland. A Swiss agronomist teaching in the USA, Professor Wahlen, came back home and organized the "Anbauschlacht" ("planting battle") for the government. Ground was broken everywhere, lawns, sports fields, front yards by plow where possible or by spade and hoe elsewhere. Our family had three plots: a nearby half acre vacant street corner lot, our backyard and grandmother's backyard. Dad did the spade work first, then my sister and I hoed the ground and mother planted row crops, beets, onions, salad, raspberries, even potatoes. Weeding is the chore of summer and harvest is the joy of fall. Before winter came, we fertilized the ground for next season. Our cistern was scooped out with a pail and long rope for raw sewage that was pushed in a wheeled barrel to the field. My year round collection of horse droppings on the streets with a little wagon helped raise a compost heap, also spread just before the first snow. Families had no refrigerators but we buried some crops in the backyard and then dug them out one at a time from under the soil and snow, just as fresh as at harvest time. Sauerkraut, pickling and canning helped preserve food without refrigeration. It augmented our food ration coupons and we did not go hungry, but only on Sunday could we eat as much as we wanted. Obesity was not a common health problem. There were never any leftovers!

Compulsory Farm Service

Each year by order of the Federal Government, all boys and girls over 11 years of age had to work without pay for three weeks of the five week summer vacation, helping on a farm, picking and killing potato bugs, harvesting cherries, apples and hay or doing any other unskilled chores. The first year I received a postcard directing me to be at a pig farm outside of town at seven AM each morning. It was a half hour bicycle ride and we worked till about 5 PM, with lunch provided by the farmer's wife. I enjoyed it, especially when we received a fresh shipment of piglets. Waste oil was rubbed on the old pigs and the new, so they could not smell which was new and bite them. Manure was loaded by shovel into wheelbarrows and an older boy pushed it to the waste heap while we younger ones got a break. Feeding was also fun, watching the pigs fight over the best position at the trough, reminds me of today's politicians! At the end of the 3 weeks the farm wife had to sign another postcard and send it back to the government to confirm my satisfactory service. Some mama's boys of well heeled parents received a dispensation from this service through "connections" or for "health" reasons. When word got around they were outcast and sneered at. I don't know if their parents ever knew or cared about it, but it was hell on those boys and not a privilege.

The following year I served in Giebenach on a farm. This was beyond bicycle distance and so I got a train ticket from the government and lived at the farmhouse the whole time. There were several other city boys and girls in town and we had a fun time after hours. Work was mostly cutting fresh grass in the morning, then cherry harvest, hay making, feeding cows and all chores that go with it.

My last farm service was in Giswil, in central Switzerland, on an unfenced alpine pasture above the tree line. The work was mostly chasing strays back to the herd and carry supplies up and

down the mountain. The herder was an old man and I recall how he sang the “Alpsegen” (blessing of the alp) every evening at dusk. It is an ancient chant, asking God for protection from bear, wolf and lynx with a ring around us people and the herd, while Mary and baby Jesus stay inside the ring with us this night. The cows heard him chanting and came from far and wide, with their bells clanging until they stood so tight around the hut that we could hardly walk through them.

Secondary School in Allschwil

Grades five through eight were taught about a mile from home on the Gartenweg in Allschwil, with boys and girls in the same class. Allschwil was still a farming town with about 40 mixed use farms, each with a few milk cows, horses, some hay fields, cherry and apple trees and maybe some grain. The government had instituted a special badge for sports achievement and one teacher said they ought to give that badge to youngsters who go barefoot all summer long to save leather. We thought he said they will give us the sport badge. So we walked to school every day all summer long, wore no shoes even during the 5-week summer break and made sure the other boys did the same. Then when it really got too cold for bare feet we asked the teacher for our well deserved sport badge. He had to explain that we misunderstood him; he only said “they” ought to give you boys that badge.

It was a public school with half Catholic and half Protestant pupils, but before and after class we always said a prayer. Teaching language was high-German. French as a second language was compulsory but English and Italian were elective. I elected English and Algebra. Chemistry and physics was also taught and as fast as an individual student could take it. Many times my homework was several chapters ahead of some of my friends, so I could easily help them with their homework. In algebra I learned to solve equations with two unknowns, but stopped short of calculus. We had a few bullies, but I was not afraid of them and they left me alone. When I got into fights it was because I stopped bullies from harassing my friends.

Leaving School, First Job

My eighth school year ended in fall of 1943. We did not have any graduation ceremonies or assemblies. The teacher of the last class, Mr. Kym, just called on me to say the usual, daily going-away prayer: “wir gehen aus der Schule fort, Herr bleib bei uns mit Deinem Wort, Mit Deinem Schutz und Segen, Auf allen unsern Wegen, Amen”.

When I had finished we all shook hands and left. Some boys remained friends, others were occasionally seen again and still others just disappeared. We were not considered “Children” anymore. My friend Herrman Truttman and I went to town to buy hats to wear to church, and after church on Sunday we had our first beer at the tavern. Another friend I knew joined the French Foreign Legion when he turned sixteen. Most started an apprenticeship, with trade school as a supplement 16 hours a week. An academic career was out of the question, because back then the decision to go to the “Gymnasium” (prep school for college) was made by the parents after the fourth grade of elementary school and not always according to ability.

I was glad to leave school though several months shy of the 15 year minimum age requirement for an apprenticeship. My cousin Franz Broggi was managing an underground coal mine (Anthrazite) in Rechy near Sierre in the upper Rhone valley. He hired me to help the surveyors. So I took the train to the Valais and started work. As the junior of the crew I held the

dumb end of the tape, no reading of numbers, just more running around from point to point. After the shift I had to clean and dry the instruments, rods and tapes and put them into the dry-shed where I also slept next to the coal stove. My uncle Seppi worked as a walking boss in the same mine and I saw him and Franz daily. We often ate lunch together underground while they told me stories of their many jobs and other experiences. Seppi always had a backpack full of apples which he passed out one by one to the miners on his rounds through the diggings.

The instrument man was middle aged, from the upper Valais and had a knack for the bottle. The other two members of the crew wanted nothing to do with numbers except those on their paycheck. So every now and then if the instrument man was missing I ran the instrument for a morning or a day. I made my notes on a sheet of paper not in the field book. When the instrument man came back with a hangover, he insisted on copying my numbers into his field book so my handwriting would not appear anywhere. I learned to run survey instruments, levels and theodolites including the great, top of the line WILD T1 model, a one-second gun!

Early next summer I was ready to leave but I wanted to save the money of the return portion of the train ticket. The station master took my return ticket and sealed it in an official envelope, telling me to present it unopened to the railroad station master in Basle for a refund. Now I had to wait until the footpath over Gemmi Pass became passable. It was an early snowmelt that year and I started my trek home on foot, in my Boy Scout uniform, going from youth hostel to youth hostel for about a week.

My last stay was in Liesberg. When I arrived I saw a sign: "closed, rented to a group". It was getting late in the day and I found the group to be a Jewish Boy Scout troop. Seeing my uniform, they invited me to eat and stay for the night. They all talked about going to Palestine when the war was over. I wonder how many of them made it and stayed there. Another day's hike and I was home, got my ticket refund and was old enough for an apprenticeship as a draftsman (Bauzeichner), but first I went to the Bankverein in the city and opened a bank account with the money I had earned. The bank required my father's signature before they let me open an account. Many people had no bank account and never wrote checks, instead just used a savings book. Wages came in a small sealed envelope with paper money and coins stuffed into it. Rent and mortgages were paid to a postal account or in cash. With all that cash floating around thieves and pickpockets probably had a great time, but when caught they were actually jailed!

First Apprenticeship Failed

Apprenticeships were a state-regulated institution, a three way contract between apprentice, employer and the Department of Apprenticeship. Instruction at the vocational school (Gewerbeschule) was one day per week on the employer's paid time and two evenings on the apprentice's own, unpaid time. My first one was with E & K, an architectural firm doing most of its work for the Sandoz chemical plant in Basle. It was the summer of 1944. I had a great time, but I must have been a bit of a loudmouth for the junior of the apprentices. After two months I was handed a letter of termination, with copy to the Department. It stated that I had a "heavy hand" and no talent for drafting, and moreover I was disruptive to office discipline. Looking back, I admit they were probably right on both counts. Nobody explained it or even talked to me about it. I did not like it but my parents liked it even less. To them it was a failure, rejection, a career begun badly. Would any company ever want to hire me with this record?

Our neighbors across the street were the Schärers. The husband was a civil engineer who managed heavy and utility construction work for Geissberger Company. He drove a company car, a rarity in those days, and had taken me with him to construction sites from time to time. He was a mentor to me. Now, for a few months, I worked for him running the truck scales on a construction site of Sandoz. This was an E & K project and the resident architect knew me from my time at his company. He was friendly and trusted me with the scale tickets, but he talked to Mr. Schärer about me and my termination. Not knowing what was said, I wondered. Mr. Schärer only told me not to take that termination too hard, but he gave my father something else to think about.

Petition of the “Two Hundred”

Suddenly my father asked me if I had talked about the war or politics in the E & K office and what I had said. I did not know why he asked but had to admit boasting loudly and daily among the apprentices how the Germans were in full retreat on all fronts and how they were surely going to lose the war any day now. Father only replied “oh, really”, but that was not the end of the story.

While most of Europe was occupied and Fascism looked like the wave of the future for the continent, a petition to the Swiss Government was circulated among some prominent movers and shakers during the early war years. Its essence was that Switzerland should “go with the flow” and not oppose the Nazis. Looking back I can only assume that some well meaning but realistic persons may have signed that petition, favoring merely some appeasement not a sellout of Switzerland. It turned out that about two hundred signed it, thus the name of the petition. Their names were later released to the press and all these people were tarred with the same brush, called traitors, ostracized from public life, society turned its back on them, the communists threw paint bottles at their houses and offices. Then I learned that Mr. E of E & K was one of those infamous “Two Hundred”. I held no grudge over my apprenticeship termination but my parents did for some time.

Public Works Department Liestal

In 1945 my uncle Paul Brodbeck was mayor of Liestal and Senator (Ständerat) for the canton Basle Land. In the city public works department they wanted an apprentice draftsman. I got the job and started on VE day. Was that nepotism? Maybe, but I did not care because I liked the work, not just drafting all day long in a small office but a lot of outside work, some surveying, some errand running. Pay was lousy, like all apprentice pay in those days, but it did not matter to me. Life was good, Boy Scout activities filled my free time and I had lots of other teenage fun. The “heavy hand” did not matter any more. After three years I took my final exam and of a possible maximum of 5.0 points I got 4.9. The canton gave me three hardbound volumes of “Fundation und Konsolidation” by Kollbrunner as a first place prize of my class. It took a few years before I understood all the formulas. When my Boss, Mr. Biasotto read the exam result he only said “5.0 would have been better”. I was now a “Tiefbau Zeichner” (civil engineering draftsman).

The Boy Scout Lifestyle

From early childhood until I left home, I was part of the Boy Scout movement. There were many scouting organizations in Basle, but in our village Allschwil we only had the Catholic

scouts. That's where I belonged. We started as cub scouts, when we had young women as leaders and gradually learned not to be afraid in the woods, not even at night. Many of the boys had their first crush on those leaders. With their long hair, tight uniforms and good looks, how could a boy help it? I was not the only one. We also learned to sing songs, tie knots and always show up on time, with pencil, paper, a pocket knife and a string. Every Saturday we went to the forest to meet and came home at dusk, tired, dirty and happy. On long weekends we went on overnight hikes and camped in tents. In summer we had a two week camping vacation usually a train ride away from home somewhere in central Switzerland. Stories from Rudyard Kipling's "Jungle Book" told by the leaders fed our vivid imagination. We all wished we could be "Mowgli" and live with the wolf family, hunting with the wild animals in the jungle.

Next step up the Boy Scout ladder was the change from blue shirts to khaki shirts, corduroy shorts, a felt hat and "real" scout-hood. An honor code was learned and mostly observed. No swearing, foul language or dirty jokes. A good deed each day was required. Groups named after wild animals had about seven boys led by an older scout called a "Venner". Several groups made up an "Abteilung" (troop). I made lifetime friends as leader of the group "Sperber" (hawks) and we were, in our own opinion, the absolutely greatest group!

At about age 15 comes the next rung up the ladder, "Rovers" (rangers) with age-appropriate activities, but still part of the troop. Unlike in the US today, there was scant adult supervision. We always had a chaplain, and there were the "Alt Pfadfinder" (alumni) sort of looking over the leader's shoulders; but not a bureaucratic organization with full time adult employees.



Being a Catholic branch of the scouts, we regularly went to church as a group in uniform. I was proud to carry the Swiss flag forward up the steps, swing it left and right and up again, then post it at the sidewall. A twelve year old girl, my future wife Romana, noticed me walking up the center aisle and my hairy legs outraged her, as she told me later.

Life goes on, and with age comes greater responsibility. I became "Feldmeister" (troop leader) and had



to deal with actual organization of the month's activities and the summer camps for the whole troop, including cub scouts, scout groups and rangers. When we had other troop leaders I even became "Oberfeldmeister" (chief troop leader) for a short time. But my jobs required travel and work out of town and that meant the end of scouting for me.

There is no better leadership training during the formative years than scouting. Contrary to higher education where passive listening and yes-saying is required, scouting involves active thinking and decision making. A young man learns to motivate his group, make things happen and lead. Making sure there is always something new to do, and never a dull moment. Have younger scouts take on responsibilities. Giving orders and checking that they are followed while still being liked and getting along with all. I thank the scout movement for all I learned.

Teenage Social Life and Activities

Some weeks there was not one "free" evening. Two evenings a week were four hours of "Gewerbeschule" (vocational school) and in any spare time I took a correspondence course "Onken" and studied whatever the job required at the moment. Of course I did not have to rehearse with the church choir, did not have to party with friends, go bowling, dancing, sing and drink all night but I wanted to. It was hectic at times and Saturday night seldom ended before 2 AM Sunday morning. We called ourselves the "Mitternachts Choerli" (the midnight singers) because we sometimes sang songs in the street in front of friend's or teacher's homes after midnight. More than once we saw the sun rise and went to early Sunday mass at 7 AM before going to bed.

My sister worked as a secretary for a small theater "Komoedie" in Basle and I went there a few times to see plays, some modern, and some classic. I liked the operettas in the City Theater better and memorized words and tunes of such favorites as "Student Prince", "Czardas Fuerstin", "Fledermaus", "Lustige Witwe" and others. Over the years, ballroom dancing became the first priority. Big band "Swing" was the music fashion and Glen Miller the most popular band leader. We sang along with "Sentimental Journey" and all the other hits of the day. Those were the days my friend, we thought they'd never end!



Ruedi Suetterlin, Rene Kueng, me (with banjo), and Walter Schaer

Part Two

Young Adult Life, Work and Horses

Work as a Draftsman

Even before I was through with my apprenticeship I started opening doors, just in case. W & J Rapp AG, a general heavy contractor, needed flagmen for street car track repair over some weekends. There was no lower age limit, but just long hours, food and drink provided and a good wage at time and a half rates. My take home pay those weekends was more than two months' apprentice wages! I told the boss to call me anytime, day or night, I would be ready. He said "that goes both ways, you call me when you look for work."

I knew that I had to go to military training that year but to pass the months between apprenticeship and boot camp I took a draftsman job at Gruner Brothers, Engineers. It was alright for a first job but strictly 8 to 6 (not 9 to 5!) and all the time at the drafting table. One project was a competition for a traffic re-development of part of Stockholm Sweden. Design of reinforced concrete structures was also done, but less interesting. I was glad when the time came to leave for boot camp.

Recruit Training, Medical Discharge and Sanatorium

For all young Swiss men, part of growing up is the "Rekrutenschule" (boot camp). In May 1947, just under age 18, I went for registration with some field and track tests. My service record card shows a 1 in climbing, 2 in long jump, 2 in steel ball throwing, 1 in sprint, height 175.5 cm (5'-10"), chest 92 cm (36"), and weight 65 kg (143 lbs). Military service was compulsory and everyone had to spend 16 weeks in training. I was sent to Emmenbrugg in July 1948 for training in anti aircraft gunnery because I had survey instrument experience. It only took about two weeks until they found I had been infected with tuberculosis. I was never considered a spreader of the dread disease but the army discharged me anyway. It was a blow to my self image and confidence. Like any twenty year old I felt immortal, nothing could happen to me, no weakness, no diseases, and no accidents ever. Now suddenly I was "dienst-untauglich" (unfit for military service) and to make matters worse, the physician-officer who discharged me was quite snoddy about it, telling me there was a slim chance of a cure, but a great risk of weight loss and progressing weakness.

The next few months I spent at the "Florentinum" sanatorium in Arosa, lying many hours each day on my back in the fresh, high altitude air. To fill some of the time, I took and passed another correspondence course in engineering. Then I read a German version of "The Dale Carnegie Course: how to make friends and influence people". I received calcium injections but no streptomycin or other medication. Fortunately there were many young people in this place and we had lots of diversions, hiked and strolled though the snow covered resort town. Smoking was prohibited and alcohol was frowned upon. I helped out in a swing band playing the drums when their drummer did not show up. We had singing evenings and I bought a ukulele and learned to play it to accompany us. While I expected to lose weight and get gradually weaker, I actually gained a few pounds and never felt physically weak or sick. In spring they sent me home, "cured".

Having Fun Making Money

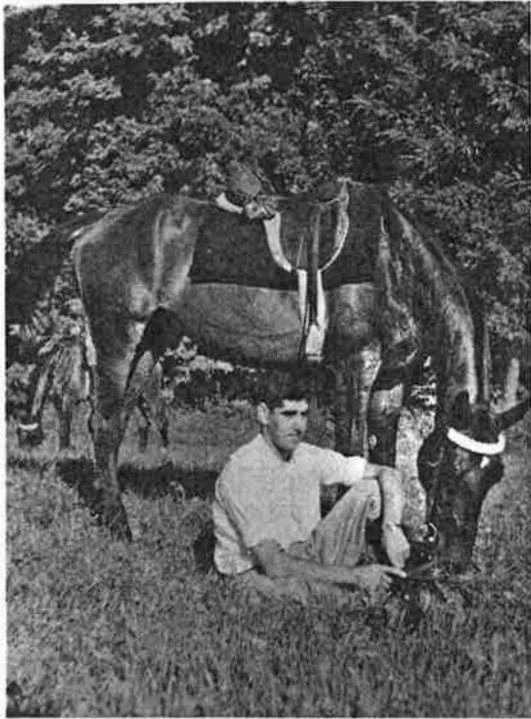
From the sanatorium I called the superintendent of W & J Rapp AG to see how the work situation looked. He asked if I had a driver's license. I said "yes," and he offered me a job over the phone. The pay was huge! Now I positively, definitely had a job starting at seven next Monday morning. Vacations were two weeks a year but none right now, and none ever during construction weather.

I had a drafting table in the office but I never drew much. The US Army held an auction of vehicles and construction equipment in Italy. Several mechanics and workers were sent to see what was of interest. They bought and drove back a fleet of Power-Wagon Dodges, Jeeps and trailers. Next morning the foremen picked the best of that fleet for their crews. The leftover "worst" one was assigned to me. I was thrilled. I even wished it had a few bullet holes but it did not. Wearing sunglasses and driving the surplus Jeep with the windshield laid down on the hood was so much fun! I was helper to the superintendent (Laufpolier) and soon forgot drafting, instead I bounced down construction roads trailing a cloud of dust. Of course as a monthly salaried man I received no overtime pay, and I worked long hours and many Saturdays, but what a job it was. Soon they let me take the Jeep home overnight because I had to be in towns many miles away like Laufen or Sissach early the next morning. Fortunately both owners of the company were very religious people and Sunday work was frowned upon, thank God. I moved up the ladder quickly and learned things they do not teach in school, cost estimating, modern equipment usage and methods for earthmoving, drilling, blasting, and soft ground tunnels.

We did drilling work, caisson foundations, pressure grouting, some soft ground tunnels and underpinning of heavy foundations. I bought my father's old VW beetle and drove it in my free time and took trips with my friends. On longer business trips I also took the VW and the company paid me for the mileage. One water-well specialty was digging 24 feet diameter caissons far below the groundwater level by hand, using air locks and compression / decompression chambers. I had to take a medical exam and passed it. Working relations within the office were good, a reflection of the owner's well balanced temperament. On jobsites, some foremen felt they must shout, pound fists on tables and slam doors from time to time. It was accepted as normal on construction jobs.

Horses, the New Passion

My friend Heini received a gift certificate for riding lessons at the Engelhof in Riehen as a birthday present. I was curious to see how it went and drove him to the place. The horses were always stabled and hardly ever let out into their tiny pasture. Swiss society riders wore "English" riding boots, special pants, silk shirts, cravats and expensive tailor made jackets. No self respecting horse would allow a rider in jeans or boat shoes to mount, or so they thought. But there was another source: army surplus riding pants could be bought for a few francs and my hiking boots topped with dad's old leather gaiters would do. So next time Heini went riding, I bought an hour of instruction for myself and joined the sport. The instructor was about our age but quite familiar with the sport and a friend of the owner of the riding school. Martin Witschi taught us as much about horses as we needed to know to help out with the riding school, leading tours of paying riders through the nearby woods and help around the stable. In turn we could ride for free.



Christian Engelman, the owner, was a good horseman but his money went “from hand to mouth” with never any available when needed. He told tales of his time in the USA, mentioning Wyoming in particular, calling it a forested state. We had our doubts. The three of us often pitched in to buy feed, have saddles repaired and even loan him some cash without ever expecting a payback. We sold riding tickets and led the tours. Then the Swiss army advertised a surplus auction of aging officer’s horses in Thun. Christian wanted to go and buy one, so did Heini and Martin. Their parents gave them the money but I did not have enough yet for such a luxury, and asking my parents was out of the question.

Heini’s aunt Trudy worked at the bank. I’d called her “aunt” since childhood, although we were not related. She knew I had an account there and she wanted me to remain a part of the three friends. So she offered to loan me one thousand francs interest free,

with 100 franc payback each month to buy a horse. I took the loan and off to Thun we went, ready to buy horses. Looking them over, Christian wanted the most spirited one for his wife Els. The beast threatened to kick or bite anyone coming near. When Christian told the trainer that he wanted that one for his wife, the trainer asked “do you want to kill her?” I was looking for a strong, sturdy gelding and got one, a tall, long Hungarian that I bought for about 800 francs and named “Janos”. In eight months he was paid off but I rode him for many years until I left Allschwil for good.

Basle’s three day long “Fasnacht” (carnival) is known far and wide, about like New Orleans’ Mardi Gras, and is the highlight of the year for many participants. Drum and fife corps called “Cliques” are trying to outdo each other with costumes and lanterns, making fun of scandals, persons or events. Crowds press from the sidewalks into the street during the parade and it requires horses to push them back. So we rode our horses along each side of the street leading groups in the parade.

Investing in Kennecott Copper

Aunt Trudy was impressed by my prompt monthly payments and quicker than expected payback. I had proven that I could pay 100 francs each month without problems, so she asked me why I did not invest. Stocks and bonds were for rich people not for teenagers, but I had a car, a horse and a bank account with a few hundred francs in it at maybe 2 or 3 percent interest. Now real money was coming in from my well paying job but I did not save much. She advised me to borrow another 1000 francs, but double the payback rate and also use the money in my account more aggressively.

Together we studied a few possible investments, stocks of Swiss, European and overseas companies. I selected Kennecott Copper and bought shares with half the amount, buying bonds with the other half. All I knew was that they mined copper for profit somewhere in the wild west

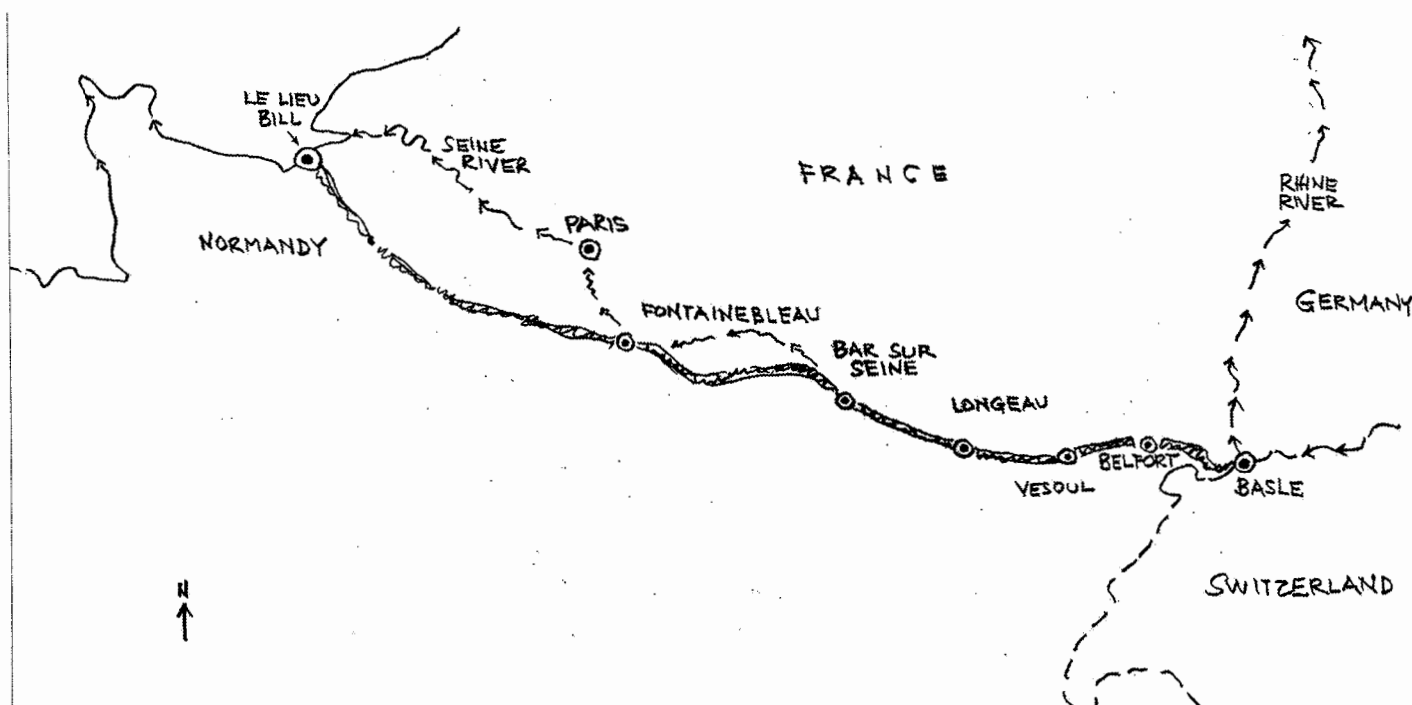
of the USA, paid regular dividends and were not over-valued at the time. Before I had paid back the loan, the shares almost doubled in value and I sold them to take the profit. From then on I was hooked on the stock market, buying and selling Nestle, Roche Namen, Motor Columbus and others with my own money, not using loans anymore. My parents always knew what I was doing and they skeptically approved, or rather refrained from disapproving. All older working class Europeans drank some socialism with their mother's milk, rented their apartments for decades and kept money in one-percent savings books. Homeowner's mortgages were paid down but not off. Stock ownership was the domain of the "rich", and my parents and relatives considered stock investors to be mostly shady speculators. Thank you Aunt Trudy wherever you are!

To Normandy on Horseback

We took good care of our horses that were stabled free at Engelhof in exchange for our work and occasionally a few francs for feed and shoes. The German border is less than a mile from the Engelhof and we rode across for dinner or camping most weekends. I read all four volumes of a Swedish explorer, Sven Hedin, whose expeditions took him across the Himalaya Range and through Tibet early in the century. Another book written by a Swiss adventurer named Tschiffeli described his ride on horseback from the south tip of South America to the USA. We dreamed of doing something like that someday. The plains of Hungary were one dream but there was an Iron Curtain in the way. America was the real dream but out of the question as too expensive. Our goal was a distance ride on our own horses but where? Northern Germany, Southern France, Normandy? Goals without plans are just dreams. We decided on Normandy. Now we had a plan and started collecting gear and saving money. Large black hats were bought and tarp-ponchos made as rain gear. A rubber-tired, light cart was found and tent, tarps, kitchen utensils and other needed stuff collected. We were ready to ride.

My mother was not thrilled about this Normandy plan, in fact she was so opposed to it, she asked the parish priest to try talking me out of it. The fear was that this would be the beginning of a life of loafing, lazy summers, unemployment upon return and any other vices that go with idleness. My father was less concerned. He only said "let him ride his own hide sore". When I told the company owners that I wanted to take a long summer leave of absence they frowned. The senior, in his eighties, warned me that there may not be a job opening when I came back in fall, but in the end they were really quite civil about it and wished me a good trip.

The three of us, Heini on his horse Caspar, Martin on Muckly and I on Janos left in mid June of 1951 with a fourth horse Lady borrowed from Engelhof to pull the cart. I will now translate reports mostly written by Heini and sent to my sister who typed and distributed carbon copies to friends, relatives and the company. I have located most names of towns on internet maps and corrected some spelling. Locations are the essence of the reports, but probably not interesting to some readers. The route can be followed on any internet map of France or on Google Earth.



Through Alsace, Report # 1 - Chatebier, June 1951

Thursday

We made it across customs at the Lysbuechel without problems as some of you saw. Then we rode through Bourgfelden, Hegenheim, Buschwiller and took a lunch break in Wentzwiler. A few tarps full of fresh grass were cut for the horses and they also got their mid-day oat ration. We continued over Folgensburg where we bought 40 pounds of oats and rode on to Kuseringen and the Windenhof. This is our first overnight camp. It was hot during the day. Windenhof is a big farming operation. The horses are in a fenced pasture with plenty of grass for the night, and we are camped in the tent nearby.

Friday

Heini gets up at three to feed the horses, others rise at four. At six we leave, direction Hirsingue through a large forest between Hirtzbach and Fulleren. The road is muddy from the rains and the woods alongside are thick with brush and rusting war scrap. We are glad to get out of it to Strueth and to the Huettenhof. Here we are given a good campsite in an open corrugated steel shed with hay and straw. We pitch our tent in the shed and span tarps on both sides to stop the blowing wind. It rains off and on.

Saturday

Getting up early, we ride past Suarce, Vellescot, and Vecelois to Belfort. We need to do some shopping, but it is 1 PM and all shops are closed. While we lose an hour waiting until they open, many people talk to us and look at the horses. One man who says he is a writer wants to write a newspaper article about us. We wear our big black hats because it is raining, and some people ask if we are Mexicans. We are glad to get back on the road. It takes us over Challonvillars to Chatebier.

Sunday

Today we rest. After Werner feeds the horses, not his usual chore, we sleep 'till eight. We all have our duties: Martin keeps saddles and gear repaired, Werner cooks, keeps maps and money and Heini writes and feeds the horses. We like this routine. Farmers from the neighborhood come from time to time to chat. Most think we are agricultural students. When they saw us using our scythe and hay forks to cut grass they thought we were farm boys. (We went to Christian Engleman's school !) Our probable route will be: south of Lure, then Vesoul, Sarigny, Genevrieries, Belmont, Longeau. Longeau is our next postal address following Vesoul.

Heini

From Werner; I am doing fine, sitting on a straw bale and writing on a board. I have enough clothing but wish I had the flashlight from the car. Money is sufficient, better than we budgeted, and we eat better than expected, sometimes even marmalade. We fed the farm dog some stale boiled potatoes, and then he stole our three raw Sunday steaks as revenge. The farmer's wife said he ate nothing all day. But we are not hungry, eating canned corned beef instead.

Into Burgundy, Report # 2 - Ferme Rubaumer, July 1951

Monday

By six we are on the road again. The weather is not good. We make it slowly down to Chenebier over steep downhill roads and it is Monday. The cart rear-ends the horse and Lady, the cart horse, gets nervous and then "sits" on the cart, bending the pipe. We leave the horses in a pasture and Werner and Heini pull the cart to the next town where – by chance – a blacksmith is at work. Things get fixed while Martin patches the leather gear. We travel on to the blacksmith's house and he invites us for coffee. He tells us what happened here in 1944. One morning the SS executed 40 men. There is now a monument to the victims and not a house without a widow or orphans in town. Early afternoon we continue and reach Lyoffans where we find a good campsite at the edge of town.

Tuesday

We begin the day by sleeping late. It is almost noon as we leave. In two hours we reach Lures. Someone told us of a Swiss motor cycle mechanic and we find him right away. He installs a friction brake on the cart axle. Downhill, one rider behind the cart can bring it to a stop by pulling a rope. We make it to Magny where we find a good dry campsite again and buy oats at the farm supply store. At night comes a terrible thunderstorm and downpour, but we are relatively dry and the horses too. Our hats and ponchos work fine but the boots never really dry out.

Comment by Werner: we sleep most nights on straw or hay to get as much rest as possible in a short time. Here we are well taken care of by a family, eat our food in their kitchen and the farmer even sharpened our scythe. In turn we clean up the pole shed and help around the farm. Such

stays with friendly people are always just too short. We arrive at 6 in the evening and have 2 hours of work for horses, cooking and gear. Then we go to sleep early and leave early next morning. Our vice is not drinking; we have no money for that. It is chatting with people, which costs nothing, but makes us lose hours each day.

Wednesday

It is raining again until noon but then turns sunny as we rest midday to dry us and our gear. Much as we hate asphalt, we use it when the dirt roads are soaked; today we pass Magny, Vy-les-Lures, Mollans, Lievans, Colombier, and Vesoul. We buy food and oats and ride on to Vaivre. Some horse lovers heard about us and come to visit; a local physician and his wife have their own horses and a farm nearby. By 7 PM it starts raining hard again. We make camp at a small farm. The farmer is reserved at first but opens up later on. Impoverished conditions and signs of war damage are all around us.

Thursday

We leave at seven in rain and thunderstorms, through Boursiere, Aroz, Traves, Ovanches, Vy-le-Rupt, and Vauconcourt. During the noon break in Ovanches we must cover the horses three times with tarps because it rains so hard that they are dripping wet. Then it turns humid and hot. Night is spent in the middle of Vauconcourt in a barn. It's a day like all the others with a lot of little chores but we do not want a rest day because the barn is not that inviting.

Friday

Heini's horse Caspar has swollen legs, we will not ride him today. We take turns leading him through Fedry, Roche, Francourt, and Raucourt. At noon we place all horses in a small cool stream to soothe their tendons. An old farmer sees our small Swiss flag and leads us to a Swiss lumber dealer in a modest historic mansion at the edge of town. We are at once invited to eat lunch with the family in the garden. The horses are grazing in the park. We continue at 3 PM to Raucourt and find lodging with a farmer who sports a big handlebar mustache. He tells us it dates back to the days before the war when he was in the French cavalry. There is also another 16th century mansion in a walled park where the horses can graze all night.

Saturday

We enjoy great weather today and good dirt roads, away from the paved main roads, through St. Andache, Fouvent-le-bas, Argillieres, Frettes, Senchey, Grenant, Ferme Grange Neuve. For the night we stay at a remote 150-acre farm "Grange Neuve". This is considered a large property here, and it is owned by a Swiss family. Martin borrows a bicycle to get our mail waiting for us in the Longeau post office.

Sunday

It is our rest-day today. Heini finally has time to write our second report. After another week on the road we have slipped deeper into France. Thanks for your letters. Here is the answer to your questions: typical breakfast menu : cocoa, bread, butter, cheese, jam. Lunch: corned beef, bread, tomatoes, then coffee and gingerbread. Dinner: milk, bread, hash-brown potatoes, steaks or gulash. Next week we hope to be in Bar-sur-Seine. Our next mailing address will be Auxon, Dept.Aube.

Heini

Comment by Werner; it is evening and we are still with the Swiss farm family. All day we worked and helped them with chores, but they fed us well and we drank some good wine. This life would be fine for a long time, but tomorrow morning it will be "goodbye" again. The trip is more strenuous than you may think, no time to take it easy. Early rising and riding all day and chores every evening leaves little energy to party at night. Most nights we crawl into the sleeping bags as soon as it is dark, often before 10 PM.

Champagne Country, Report # 3 - Bar-sur-Seine, July 1951

Tuesday

We leave Grange Neuve at seven, with a great sendoff, pictures taken, handshakes, a feeling they were sad to see us go. Before us is the plateau of Langres, wide flatland and dirt roads. In two hours we reach St. Geomes. Werner stays back with the horses while Heini and Martin go to Langres shopping. Afternoon we ride through Noidant, Perrancey, Chameroy. It is hot and humid. Luck has it that we find a great place to stay in an old mill that now serves as a lemonade factory. This evening our tiny gas cooker finds its sorry end, it explodes without causing any other damage. We have the whole old mill home at our disposal.

Wednesday

Like always when we have a cozy place to sleep, it is tough to get up early, so we get up late. First we stand the horses into the cool water of the mill run; it's good for their legs. Muckly likes it so much he rolls on both sides, but cuts his front left knee getting up. He is patched up. A stiff mid morning drink of prune brandy with the two mill owners lets us forget the incident and we ride away late but happy. Route: Vitry, Arbot, Rouvres, Aubepierre. At 3 PM we flee into the shade and rest because the horseflies are too annoying in the sunlight. From 10 to 11 PM we ride to Boudreville, but Muckly's cut has been infected and he limps visibly. We improvise a field camp with rope fence and tent alongside the dirt road and sleep well.

Thursday

Early in the morning Heini goes to tell the farmer that we are in his pasture. He is a nice, young fellow and does not mind. From the road this farm looks like a walled fortress! His mother tells us the history of farm and town. She knows many horse remedies, but calls a veterinarian anyway because we cannot use lengthy cures and rest. The vet comes by after noon and gives Muckly a tetanus shot just in case, and then gives us a red salve to treat the cut every day. Having lost the day, we get away at 10 PM and ride all night until five the next morning through Courban, Rielles-Eaux, and Autricourt. There, letting the horses rest, we sleep for three hours. The horses will not walk away from us even in an open pasture when they are tired. Caspar lays down and munches some grass like a cow, the other three horses sleep standing up.

Friday

By nine we are moving again past Grancey, Essoyes, and Landreville to Bar-sur-Seine. We halt before entering the town near Merrey to clean up in the river Ource. It is a great life here; we swim in the river every day. Yesterday night was a city festival with marching bands and fire engine parade. Unfortunately it started to drizzle but that did not dampen the spirit. Tomorrow we will move again. It is a special feeling to travel. After two days in one place we are anxious to move on. We meet all kinds of people and like to talk with them, to listen to their stories – and they have lots to tell! They know their country and like to get their story told.

Another week is gone since our last report and we have reached the Seine, that beautiful slow river winding its way through a wide valley toward Paris. We arrived last Friday and were warmly received by family Morel (friends of the Muellers) who expected us. The horses are rested and we take short rides into the neighboring towns. Tomorrow Tuesday we will ride away again. By the 16th we should be in Fontainebleau where we have our next mailing address care of the postmaster.

Heini

Comment by Werner; its July 10th, my 22nd birthday. We are lounging around in this forest about ten miles beyond Bar-sur-Seine. We got away late but well rested. Saturday I did the laundry, now everything is clean. It is good to feel "civilized" for a few days, just not for too long. Maybe we can find a canal boat to take us around Paris. Janos and I are well. Write to tell me who all must get postcards so I don't forget anyone. Now I rest some more on the blanket in the shade.

Ille de France, Report # 4 - Fontainebleau, July 18, 1951

Tuesday

We get away at nine and proceed over Jully-sur-Sarce, through the forest of Aumont, reaching Jeuny by five where we find a good pasture with a nice family. The son drives us to Auxon to get mail. We have one letter from each family.

Wednesday

Off at six to Somneval, Vauchassis, Boucey-en-Othe, Estissac where we rest for noon. Then we ride past Pouy-sur-Vannes to Courgenay. That last stretch leads us through a dense forest with charcoal pyres and lots of rusting war scrap. The charcoal maker shows us the way and warns us of potential unexploded ammunition. No wonder the French "Resistance" could hide for months undetected in these thick jungle-like woods, "le maquis". This evening we find a good, fenced pasture but no aged hay to buy. Rather than letting them have new hay we let them graze the pasture all night long.

Thursday

Starting late on small trails over Thorigny, St. Martin, Gisy, Pont-sur-Yonne and then on the "Route Nationale" we ride many miles past Villeneuve. We hate paved roads but sometimes we have to resort to them when there is no other way. As the most direct line they help us cover great distances in a hurry. After a long rest we resume the ride at midnight reaching Moret by daybreak at the edge of the great forest of Fontainebleau.

Friday 13th

We rest and clean up until ten, then ride through the forest to the "Centre Hypique Francais" where we arrive at noon. The horses need rest after about 400 trail miles. We have reached our first goal and are tired. Tomorrow 14th July we will watch France's National Day parade. Our horses are now in the "Centre" and live like kings. Lady is in a box stall and the three boys have berths 8 feet wide. This center is something like the "Regie" in Thun, managed by the French army but mostly training horses for competitive show, race and jumping sports. It is the most important institution of its kind in France with over 250 horses stabled, one more beautiful than the next. Our reception by the officers and staff was enthusiastic and the horses are being pampered.

We live in our tent camp about five minutes from the stables in the tall pine forest in ideal riding terrain. Trails of sandy soft ground in deep shade fit to be galloped over all day long. Martin on Muckly and Werner on Janos just rode by the camp for their daily two hour ride around the woods. This will be a whole week of rest and we plan to continue on the 23rd. All horses get new shoes tomorrow. Some trainers come by from time to time to see how we are doing and to chat. For the first time since leaving Basle we feel like we are on vacation.

Our plan is to bypass Paris on its southwest and write the next report from the vicinity of Lignerolles. Next mailing address is Deauville, Department Calvados.

Heini

Past Paris to Normandy, Report # 5 - Le Chemin Perre, July

The week in Fontainebleau went by quickly. Heini's parents the Müller's visit us as we are about to leave and Heini's fiancée Gladys is also with them. This gives us a chance to tidy up and eat civilized in a fancy restaurant for a change. We also make a quick trip into Paris. But now we must get back to the "work" of our trip after goodbyes from all our new found friends at the "Centre".

Monday

Under occasional showers we ride through Arbonne-la-foret, Courance, Moigny-sur-Ecole, Boutigny-sur-Essonne, Vayre where we camp in the park of a little "chateau" and are invited to tea and chat. Many well-off Parisians spend the hot summer months here in their country houses. Gladys rides with us and Martin is in Müller's car ahead of us.

Tuesday

Route: Bouville, Villeneuve Sur Auvers, Avens St. Georges, Etrechy, Saudreville. During midday rest our horses run away, a sign they are well rested, and we run to catch them. This evening we are surrounded by vast, flat wheat fields. Gladys still rides with us and Werner is in the chase car.

Wednesday

Route: Vilconir, Sermaise, Le-Val St.-Germain, St. Cyr, Rochefort, Bougeneuf, Les Moutiers, Vieille Eglise, Le Perray-en-Ivelines, Les Breviaires. This evening we find a wonderful barn with four box stalls, old hay and grass. We rest here for a day and go shopping in Rambouillet by car.

Friday

The visitors have left for home and we ride on to Le Matz, Croix Pater, Adainville, Grandchamps where we take a noon rest in front of an old mansion. The owner comes out with a bottle of hard cider and helps us with road advice. People are so friendly that we hate to leave. Then we continue by way of La Mousse, Broue, Marolles, Abondant, camping at night in Brissard.

Saturday

We are ready for the road at six AM through the wooded areas of Jvry, Sorel, Moussel, Creth, St. Lorent, Lignerolles, Coudres, Chavigny, Bailleul, Thomers-la-Sogne, Boulliant,, Chevalliers, Villers, Les Brechelles. Our host for tonight is a Belgian wheat farmer.

Sunday

Today's route is past Manthelon, Nagel-Seez-Mesnil, Le Laye, St. Marguerite and Guernanville to Le Chemin Perre. It is a muggy day and the horseflies are thick and bloodthirsty. Around us are

dairy farms. We spend the night in a barn and the horses are in a fenced pasture. They roll in the nettles and Janos steps on Heini's foot so that he limps for a day. That's Heini limping, not Janos.

It is our second day in Normandy, the goal of our trip. Apple trees stand in long rows of orchards along both sides of the road and we no longer drink lemonade but hard cider or "cidre bouchonnez", a kind of apple champagne. It's only a week's ride to the coast where we expect to be soon and enjoy a good vacation.

Comment by Werner; we rest in a row of shade trees along the entrance to a country mansion. The grass reaches the horses' bellies. It is lunch hour about fifteen miles south of Bernay. Normandy is different from the previous regions, not much wheat but instead apple orchards. The farms are smaller, with much shrubbery, the famous hedgerows and some pine groves between them. We now have half a month to enjoy the goal of our trip. Please send me father's map of the Voges mountains for the final ride from Luges to Basle, so we can find better trails than on the Michelin road maps.

Normandy, Shores of the Channel, Report # 6 - Le Lieu Bill, Blonville, August 1951

Monday

We walk a stretch, leading the horses because the asphalt is so slippery to La Vieille Lyre, St. Jaques, St. Pierre du Mesnil, Montreuil-l-Argille, and St. Aubin; then we get into the hedgerow country with dirt roads. Night is spent at a typical Normandy farm with small rock house, barn, duck-pond and apple trees. The surrounding pasture has free running cows, pigs, sheep, ducks, chicken and a dog.

Tuesday

Getting off to a good start after a drink of "Calvados" brandy with the farmer, we ride through Familly, Meulles, Pre-d'Auge, and Chateau de la Boissiere. We ride again all day long between hedgerows under a cloudy sky but no rain. We are invited to stay in a small castle. Our hosts are a young family with children, renting the farm land from their parents who live in the castle; intelligent and interesting people but not cash-wealthy anymore, just land-rich. Country mansions, horse breeders and brandy producers are in the vicinity. We hear a lot of stories and listen well, but we also talk in our much improved French.

Wednesday

After a late start we ride past Valseme, Glanville and Blonville to Le Lieu Bill, through rich orchard country. Le Lieu Bill is a large property of 350 acres with cattle, dairy cows, plowed land and apple orchards at the edge of the ocean. They make their own cider and calvados brandy. The horses disappear into the pasture day and night and only come for their oats ration when we whistle for them. For the first time we had to buy oats from a dealer because farmers don't have horses, so they don't have oats to sell. We gallop full speed on wet beach sand at low tide.

Our host takes us for car tours up and down the coast, from Deauville to Cabourg and his neighbors invite us almost every evening for dinner. It is the life of leisure in good company, having coffee overlooking the ocean or sitting before a fireplace late at night. The hospitality of Normandy to strangers with horses is great. Our plan is to take the train from Caen to Belfort and arrive there about August 19th, then ride about 8 miles east to Chatebier to our friends and hosts,

the family Begez. It would be great if you met us there.

Heini

Comment by Werner: We are well but sorry to know the ride will end soon. In case you also drive to meet us in Chatebier, could you invite Martin's mother for the trip? I have just written 30 to 40 postcards in one sitting and I am now numb from writing.

The Trip Home from Normandy

We wrote no other reports after number six. One cool morning we left for the railway station in Caen and put the horses into cattle cars. For half fare we were allowed to ride in the same cattle car with cart and baggage so we could look after the horses. Rail yard work to assemble trains was done by steam engines. Our car was pushed over a hump and then let roll freely until it impacted on the bumpers of the train that would take us to the next main yard. Once coupled, we had more free rolling cars impact on ours. The horses were afraid of the steam noise, stomped and tried to jump. Our worry was that they might put a hoof through the rotten wooden floor of the car. Still, we slept well and the next evening we rolled, literally, into Belfort Station.

Once back on our previous trail, the horses sensed the way home and would not let us deviate from it without a fight. What a wonderful ride we had through postwar France. We always paid for hay and oats. When we offered to pay for pasture, tent space or lodging, acceptance was always graciously refused. We learned a lot about the country and its people and made friends along the way. The ride was mostly hard work and allowed not much time for loafing. Looking back, I am sure even my mother realized that too. Back home, my first call was to the company. They had received and circulated a copy of our reports to coworkers, including the company owners who read it with great interest and asked questions. Of course I had my job back and a dinner invitation to bring pictures and tell the two Rapp families about the trip.

With Horse and Tent Through Ireland

Working on construction, I lost contact with Martin until I learned that he was emigrating to the USA. Heini was going steady with Gladys and they planned to marry soon. I was already planning my next trip and realized I had to go alone. This time it would be Ireland. The Swiss army still had mounted cavalry and bought horses from many countries including Ireland. An acquaintance of mine, a horse dealer, wrote two letters of introduction to Irish horse breeders. This year the company owners knew of my plans and just wished me a good trip like they did the previous year. All I took as baggage was a box with saddle, tent, camping gear, rope and ukulele. The wide brimmed hat and poncho would come in handy again against the daily rains. Here are the translated "reports" I wrote home:

Basle to Waterford, Ireland, Report # 1 - August 1952

Not much to report about the train ride from Basle to Boulogne. The ferry across the Channel encountered rough seas and rain. Then by train to London Victoria Station and by taxi to the Paddington Station where trains for Fishguard on the Irish Sea depart. Because of the big saddle box I hire a porter. Halfway through the hall at exactly 4 PM he stops and says "my time is

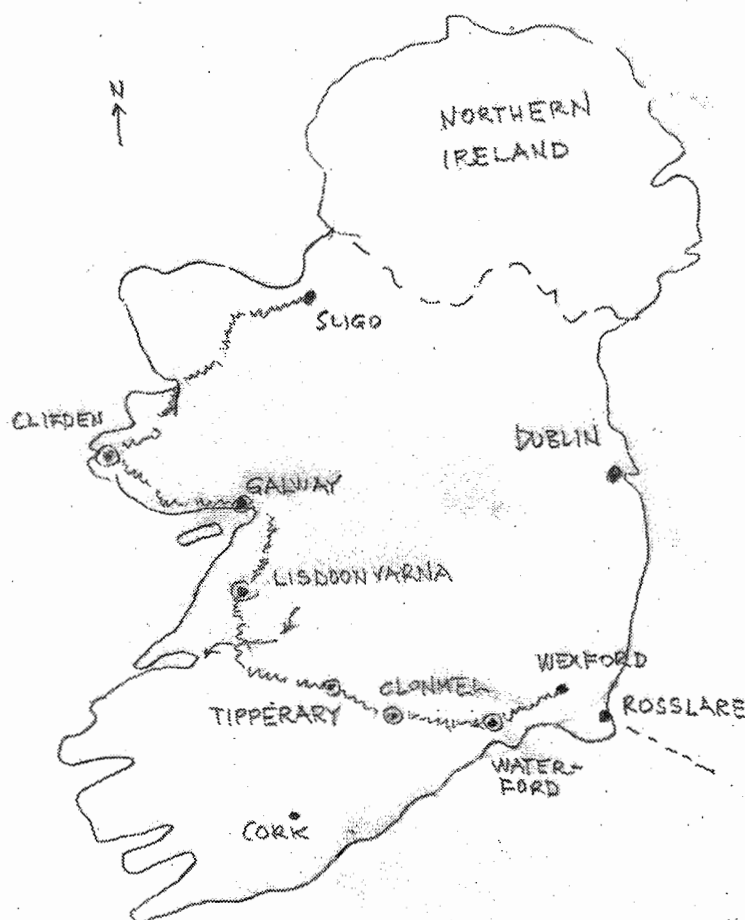
up, take another porter". So I take the cart myself and find the freight car of the train. To pass some time before departure I have a cup of tea. The service is unfriendly and expensive.

The waiting passengers seem different from the English in London. It is Saturday night and they go back to Ireland, probably for vacation. Groups of young people sing songs and pass a bottle around. So, these must be the Irish? I am curious. As the "standing room only" train pulls out of the station there is as much waving and shouting as when an Italy-bound train pulls out of Basle. I stand in the gangway looking out into the disappearing London fog. A young fellow senses that I am a stranger and invites me to join his group sitting packed on the rough benches. Most of them work in London and go home to Southern Ireland for a long weekend or a vacation. Only two are disillusioned and say they will never return to England. They all ask me questions and give me pointers how to get along in their home country.

The ship leaves Fishguard on the southwest tip of the British Isles in fog before daylight, but it is a fine sunny morning when we reach Roslare Harbor in Ireland. The landscape on both shores is rocky, some brush, hardly any trees and quite cool for August. We all disembark, exchange names and addresses and say "good bye". I leave the box at a harbor warehouse and help an old Irish man returning from England carry his suitcase. He says he will help me find a bed-and-breakfast place. We walk about an hour when he says "I am home". It is Kilnick and he directs me to Rosslare-Beach another 3 miles away. It is holiday season and the place is almost full. I check in, eat lunch, and then sleep all afternoon and all night.

Monday

By taxi cab I return to the harbor to retrieve my box, then we drive to one of the breeders that I have letters for. He has nothing suitable for me but tells the driver to go to a trainer, Christie Purshell, who may be of help. It is 1 PM when Purshell calls a nearby dealer who says he has what I need and to come by tomorrow. Returning to the bed-and-breakfast I find some other guests in the hall and we talk and sing a few Irish songs, most new to me. I write the words down and memorize them. I sing a few German songs for them in return. On the beach I collect an oat bag full of shells. It



stays light long after sunset.

Tuesday

Early by cab we drive to "Glendine", a mansion owned by the Beresford family halfway between Waterford and Dungarvan. The dealer is a Mr. Shanahan. The sturdy horse, a mare about 4 years old, has a rough coat from being in pasture for months, reddish long tail and trimmed, light red mane standing straight up. She is halter-broke and well mannered but not much for gaits and would rather canter than trot. We agree on price and I give him a check drawn on the Swiss Bankverein, getting the horse I will call "Glendine" and a bill of sale in return. I leave the saddle box and some extra baggage with him and he knows I will return to sell Glendine back to him. Then he invites me for dinner and to stay the night. Later I visit an East-German refugee family and we sing old German songs late into the night. My ukulele is quite an icebreaker with people who like to sing. Returning to the mansion, I sleep in the living room on the carpet.

Wednesday

I have to ride some distance on the paved road toward Dungarvan but Glendine feels the oats I fed her yesterday and gets jumpy anytime a car passes. I try to wear her down, letting her rip on soft side roads. I leave the road and pass between the Comeragh and Knockmealdown (what a name!) Mountains on good dirt roads to the small pass village of Ballynamult. I find a pasture for the horse and pitch the tent under a tree. The blacksmith, Mr. O'Connor invites me to stay in the house. I hand out sea shells to the small children. In the evening we go look around the village. An off-duty policeman talks to us in front of the pub. We drink several thick and almost scented local beers. I have to try the different types until I like one. Of course the ukulele leads to singing. Everybody is surprised that I know the words to Irish songs. The policeman gets a few older "barflies" to dance some folkdance steps while the other men clap the beat and make music without instruments. The mood rises until it is a jolly good party.

Alcoholism is still quite a problem in this poor country, like it was in Switzerland decades ago. Many men go to the bar at night, every night, standing and staring into their beer or whiskey glass for hours. Staggering drunks late at night are quite normal. That is a sad picture.

Thursday

Through the mountain valley with sheep pastures and rock mound "fences" reminiscent of Normandy I reach Newcastle by noon. It is 2:30 PM and I eat a sandwich in the tavern. The owner and the parish priest are there. They want to know where I am from, what I do and why the ukulele? So they teach me a few new Irish songs as gradually more people come into the tavern. By 4:30 the bar gets crowded and an hour later I ride on to Ardfinnan where I spend the night. I have given up on visiting the Killarney District, aiming instead for Connemara where I intend to take it easy, like a vacation.

Friday

Today I get a late start because Glendine did not want to be caught. Needed help from three passersby and the long rope to catch her. I ride through Cahir Town direction Tipperary and rest. A teacher comes by with his dog and invites me to have lunch with his family. I can even take a shower and shave before I continue to Bansha. The trails are pleasant but too crooked to let me cover great mileage. The map shows a bridge but there is just a ford and the water comes almost to the top of my boots as Glendine gallops through it. Near Bansha I camp and hobble the horse in an unfenced meadow.

Saturday

It is my day of rest. I find about 45 swollen insect bites between my left hand and elbow. The doctor says not to worry about it, gives me Benadryl, wants no money and we have tea, ham and tomato sandwiches together. Then I borrow his bicycle and go into Tipperary to buy a better map and other supplies. This is my first report from Ireland. Compared to last year in Normandy it is an easier ride all by myself with only one horse. Still, I have hardly a free hour with chores, cooking, shopping etc. Hospitality is as great here as it was there. When people see me riding alone they want to chat. I could just stay and chat all day and probably all night long but I must move on. My next report will probably come to you from Galway.

Across the Shannon River, Report # 2

Sunday

After cleaning up I go to church with the host family and leave after lunch about 1 PM. Light rain for an hour, followed by a drenching cloudburst with few trees for shelter. I lose the way and finally get back on the trail, reaching Cappawhite at 7 PM. The rain has stopped and a young baker, John Joe Buckley, invites me to his home to dry out and he also finds a barn for Glendine. While we talk in the street a girl comes by asking for an autograph. I tell her I am not a cowboy despite my hat but sign her book anyway. She goes to college in England and autographs must be the fashion there. After dinner it is cool enough to burn turf in the fireplace and the ukulele gets another workout with assembled family and friends. I sleep in the guest room of a large neighbor house.



Monday

John Joe drives to Limerick for supplies and I tag along. He gives me a tour of the city and some tourist sites in the vicinity. As we get back dinner is ready. Then I write my previous report. As I get to the neighbor's house late night, the host is waiting for me in front of the fireplace. Retired colonel Forster is a widower in his eighties. Although an Irish citizen he served his whole career in the British army on the Indian subcontinent, where he left his heart. He reminisces fondly about his time between the borders of Afghanistan, Nepal and Burma, sounding "homesick" for that different world and nostalgic about his younger years. I learn a lot about that part of the world and it is 2 AM before I can go to bed.

Tuesday

After an early breakfast he surprises me by asking to see my hand. While he reads the hand lines, or pretends to do so, his granddaughter writes down what he says:

“you will always be very healthy and will never have any sickness except for your heart; you have plenty of tact in dealing with people; you believe in work and action; you could be an inventor if you wished; you have got a very good brain and do not hesitate before you work; you will marry at about forty five years of age; you reason a lot before you work, safety first always with you; you will never have a serious accident; your travels will be successful and you will go on about three or four very long journeys; you will live until you are about seventy”

(PS : that last prediction is apparently wrong !)

The granddaughter gave me the note and I kept it. Right or wrong, what surprised me most was that Col. Forster did hand reading at all!

As I leave, neighbors are in the street waving. I trot in the direction of Castelconel where I find pasture and a place for the tent. I eat in the nearby town. Last week a young lady journalist for the “Tipperary Star” interviewed me and now people show me what is printed in that local paper:

“SWISS VISITOR, Many people thought a “Wild West” man had arrived when a rider on horseback rode into the village of Ballinamult on Wednesday of last week, dressed like a cowboy, with lasso and ukulele. He was Mr. Werner Rümmele of Lerchenweg Neuallschwil B.L. Switzerland; a 23 year old foreman engineer attached to the Hydro Electric Company (). He stayed in the home of Mr. M. O'Connor, Ballinamult, where he entertained the local inhabitants with song and music. He has traveled in many countries including France, Germany, England and S. America (*), and is now on a tour of Ireland.”*

My English may not be the best, but I did not tell her all those mistakes (). The first question is always “how do you like Ireland?” followed by the second question “what do you think of Irish girls?” Well, what can I say, yes and yes.*

Wednesday

A man directs me to a trail to O'Brien's Bridge that is not shown on the map. Just before that town the trail ends in a ford across the Shannon River. Glendine has learned how to ford a river: through the middle with a firm pace and then at a gallop up the other bank. I ride between two mountain ranges direction Broadford and reach Kilbane. Glendine is bloated with signs of colic and I find a fresh cut field with just stubbles. I don't want her to eat any more fresh wet green grass. As soon as saddle and bridle are off she rolls a few times and seems to overcome her problem. By chance there is one of the few Youth Hostels in this town and I am well received.

Thursday

Beyond Broadford is a large section of open range land with some swamps that allows me to make good mileage. I ride into a park surrounding a mansion. An old lady works the flower garden and invites me to stay, but it is only just past noon and I have to move on. It gets foggy and cool. I keep riding until 9 PM when I find a hay barn for the horse and the hay stack for myself.

Friday

The land is now rocky with small, hard shrubbery. I turn in the direction of Killinaboy and Killeenovara. The horse is tired and I lead her after lunch to take the load off. It is a long way to

Lisdoonvarna. From a high point before town I can see the Atlantic Ocean and some islands. A well known mineral hot spring makes this a resort town with several hotels and inns. As it gets dark, a man on a bicycle stops me in the street and invites me to his hotel. Glendine can use the small pasture. "Spa View" is a two story hotel with an elegant dining room. I take one of the last vacant rooms, clean up, shave, polish my boots and put on a fresh shirt. I feel civilized and fit to meet the other hotel guests for dinner. Afterwards there are lots of questions to be answered. They saw my ukulele when I arrived and want to sing. We do the "Rundgesang" (each in the circle starts a new song) and I learn a few new songs. I write them down. Then some guests take me along to a dance hall and later to several bars. By 3 AM we return to the hotel and have to ring the night bell to get in.

The sendoff next morning is unique and moving. All the guests are watching as I saddle Glendine. The niece of the owner rides on a little pony to escort me out of town. We take a group photo in front of the hotel. I receive a gift of Irish Linen Towels and a Fountain Pen from the guests, with a thank you note for "a grand night's entertainment"! Then the owner makes a short speech, gives me an envelope with the money I had paid for room and meal, and everybody starts singing "when Irish eyes are smiling".



Saturday

The coast highway leads around the Burren area, where Neolithic structures called "Dolmen" can be seen, if you know where to look. I ride through Poulsallagh, Black Head, Ballyvaughan, about 21 miles from Lisdoonvarna. Arriving 10:30 PM I find a good, rock-free place to pitch the tent and pasture fenced by rock walls. Now I rest and write. As you can see I go from well to very well. It costs me less than expected. I often eat in pubs or inns and only cook when I have to. Now comes Connemara and then on to Counties Donegal and Sligo.

It was a strenuous week since I left Bansha near Tipperary. The horse is not very smooth gaited but improving. Most nights she tires sooner than I do, forcing me to lead her or camp. But she is getting in better condition and is now trained to trot both English and German style, change lead leg in canter for a figure eight. I need not dismount to open or close gates because she can back up or turn sharp. Of course longer day trips mean less time for camp and chores.

From Galway to Sligo, Report # 3

Monday

Well rested, I leave Ballyvaughan on the slippery asphalt road, with Glendine in a spooked mood all morning. Too much rest and oats! By the time we get to Kinvarra she settles down to the routine. The blacksmith fits cleats to her horseshoes. While he works I visit the local pub. The owner has read about me in the paper and wants to keep me in town. He already has a pasture lined up for the horse. But I have to move on or I will never get to Sligo. It rains until I reach Clarin Bridge but we keep moving until 9 PM when I find a pasture outside Galway City. I borrow a bicycle and ride into the city to eat, do a little sightseeing and sleep in a room with bath.

Tuesday

Biking back to the pasture I get away by 8 AM. This is the largest city I have ridden through. People wave, take photos and boys run alongside. I do not want to lose time and ride on. The highway along the shoreline of Galway Bay leads west to Barna, Spiddal, Doerletter, three fishing villages along the road. After the midday rest I am shown a shortcut by a local man. It is not on the map and I don't know why I always fall for such "shortcuts". Most begin well but end badly. This one ends at a swamp with some rock wall ruins and a cross. Maybe an old homestead. I have to backtrack some distance to find my way to the northbound road. The area is about half land and half water. Remote farms and few trees are far apart as Deroogh and Kinvarra are traversed before I make night camp. No pasture or fences here, so I hobble the horse, set the saddle against the wind and dig a long trench to lay in, with the tarp as a roof. The dug-out rocks are placed on both sides of the trench. Firewood is hard to find but I need the fire during the cold night.

Wednesday

I rise early and get the fire going again with wood I saved yesterday. Hot coffee revives me while Glendine munches oats from the feed bag. At 6:30 AM we leave in the inland direction with an ocean breeze at our back, past Screeb, Derryrush, Mt. Cashel where we stop for lunch. Approaching a highway I see tall trees two miles away. It turns out to be a walled park with a large house. As I look over the wall someone calls. An older gentleman and a young lady playing croquet on the lawn invite me in. A half hour later we have "tea and crumpets" in the house. The gentleman serves and from his manners I suspect he may be the butler / chaperon. Of course I have to play the ukulele and we sing a few songs. By 5 PM the question is raised if I would like to stay the night. Knowing that I can still do a few miles before nightfall, I decline and ride on westward to Ballinahynch. A quarter mile off the highway I make camp again in the rocks like the day before. The fire is barely lit when a new Austin car stops on the highway and honks. I wave and they wave back. They are the two people from the villa, curious to see how far I got. Then they make a U-turn and return to the villa. The daily evening drizzle does not bother me in the tent.

Thursday

I leave at 7 AM and reach Clifden before ten. It is a city with two churches and a fishing harbor. I buy and write 25 postcards and ride through downtown. An abandoned railway station built 50

years ago and idled 18 years ago stands dilapidated at the edge of the city. There is no industry here. I ride 4 hours past an ancient abbey and a castle to Killary Harbor at the end of a long fjord. It is cold and I make camp at the side of a bald mountain appropriately called "Devil's Mother". Firewood is plentiful and I use a lot of it. This is the coldest night so far. At 3 AM I awake and throw some more wood on the embers to keep warm.

Friday

Everything is dew covered and wet, but a good wind brings sunny weather that dries my gear, boots and the horse as we reach Perrink. It is not easy to avoid the highway. Trails zigzag all over the place and seldom lead directly to where we have to go. I ride through Triangle where people still speak Gaelic language and some homes have straw roofs. I buy oats and eat the customary lunch of cold ham and tomatoes in a pub, then sleep in the sun for an hour. Proceeding through Cloonkeen I reach the city of Castlebar. To heat my camp I get turf chunks and they do burn but the smoke smells bad. At dusk I notice about 100 insect bites on my body again. I rub the Benadryl on them and spray Dettol into the sleeping bag.

Saturday

I leave early because I expect mail at the Ballymote post office. The winding trails are confusing and I have to resort to the highway again, trotting on the wide, sandy shoulders. By 2 PM I am there but find no mail. Nearby is a large house where I am well received and invited to stay, but I pitch the tent in the park because it is warm and dry weather. If I stay with the hosts in their house then it is not polite to leave early.

Sunday

Riding off early past Colooney Junction I am eager to get to Sligo Station and end the trip. The last days brought me through inhospitable country with friendly people, but I have had enough of riding alone. A friendly farmer offers to keep Glendine in his pasture for a few days and then bring her and the baggage to the station and ship them. I give him what oats are left and walk to the station. It is closed but will be open tomorrow. So I hike into Sligo and find a bed-and-breakfast. After a hot bath in the tub I sleep for 18 hours.

This was my last "report" from Ireland. Next day I bought a ticket and prepaid the freight for the horse and baggage to Waterford, where the railroad promised to keep the horse in their stockyard for up to one week at no extra charge. I took the train to Dublin and visited one of the young men I had met on the trip, Seoise Plunkett, who drove me around the city, Glendalough and many other tourist sites for two days. He had to learn the "Gaelic" language in school but hardly ever uses it. When friends say a Gaelic word to each other in the big city, they grin or wink. It is not like in Donegal. Then I take the train to Waterford and arrive some hours before Glendine.

As the cattle car is pushed onto the siding where I wait, she greets me with a loud whinny out of the open car door, to the amazement of some railroad workers. She tries to jump out of the cattle car before it reaches the team track ramp. When I have my bag and saddle, we ride away to the applause of the railroad workers! The way back to Shanahan's paddock is easy. Glendine knows the way and is as eager as I am. By evening we are there as Shanahan is exercising a horse. I put Glendine through the paces and he is impressed. The horse is well fed, well trained and ready to be sold to some police department.

During dinner we talk about him buying back the horse. He asks me: "are you the son of a rich father?" I reply "no, I have earned all my own money by working". Then he takes my check out of a drawer. Handing it to me he asks if this is a fair price for the horse and I agree. After dinner he drives me and my saddle box to Rosslare Beach where I check in at the same bed-and-breakfast. We part as friends. I had a free ride through the Emerald Isle!

Our Group of Friends

My social circle was made up of friends from the Boy Scout times, and a few girls that we sort of dated, mostly as a group rather than one-on-one. Going steady was still beyond the horizon, but dancing and swing music was so important that we needed them as dance partners. Seppli Pfaff, a bit older than I, had the use of his fathers "Hudson" automobile, a "boat" by today's standards that took us to southern France and back in great style. My previous Boy Scout group of Walter Schär (Humpe), Ruedi Sütterlin (Fox), Rene Küng (Bear) and Hans Spät (Buffalo) were joined by Heini's younger brother Nicklaus Müller (Niggi). They all wanted to learn horseback riding and I dragged them to the Engelhof for lessons in exchange for help with the chores. It was not a fashion conscious group, but they were drawn to horses like ducks to water! Soon we took long weekend rides into nearby Germany like years ago with Heini and Martin. Singing was always part of the group and I replaced the fragile ukulele with a sturdier banjo. Playing left no hands free for the harmonica, so I tied a board and wire clip to my neck and was able to play harmonica and banjo at the same time.

In time, we moved the two horses Janos and Caspar to Allschwil and set up a schedule for their twice-a-week exercise. We all took turns riding them through the Allschwil forest or over the hills to Biel Benken. My friends became good horsemen and also learned how to take care of horses. They rode through France on their own distance ride in 1955 when I was in Pakistan.

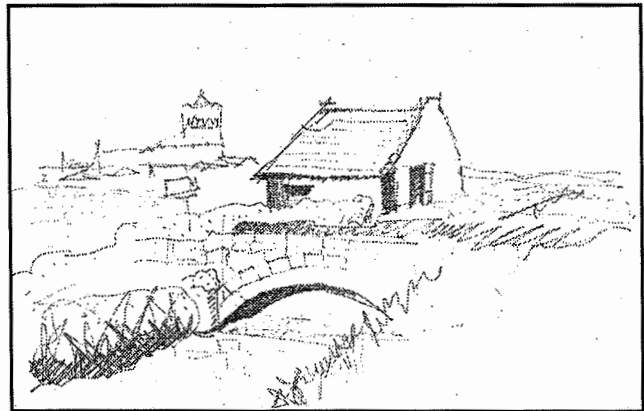
My Own Horse-Drawn Carriage

While looking for construction tools in the company yard I found a light horse-drawn carriage in a shed under cover of a tarp and years of accumulated dust and bird droppings. It belonged to the senior owner of the company and was well preserved for decades. I asked Mr. Rapp (senior) if I could buy it, but he first wanted to ask all his many grandchildren about their interests. Some weeks later he told me, somewhat disappointed, that none of his offspring had any love for horses or ever would use that carriage. But, he said "you will not get it for peanuts!" Smart Alec that I was, I asked: "would you prefer Swiss francs instead?" Well, yes, we made the deal. I bought his old carriage and moved it to a friend's farm in Schönenbuch.

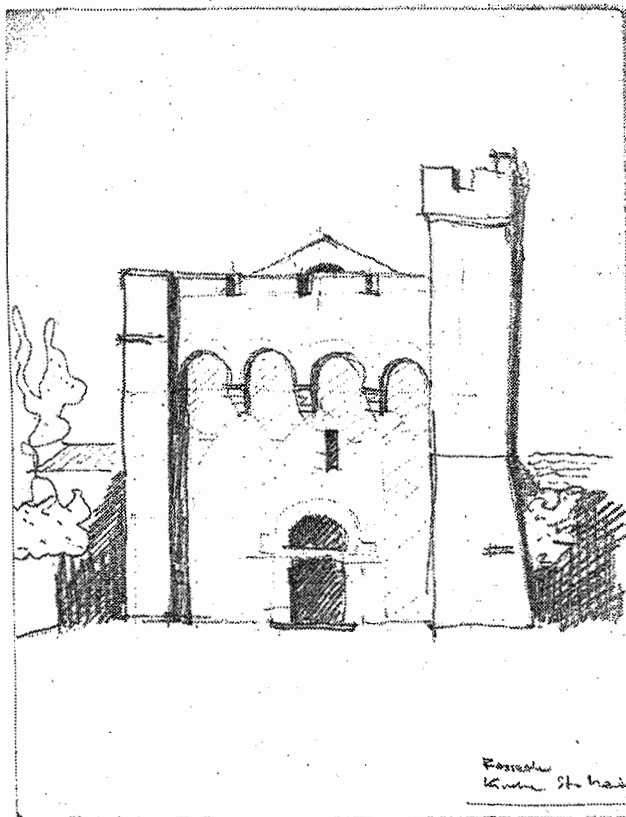
It had a wide, upholstered bench in the back over large wheels with a collapsible leather roof. A smaller "suitcase" bench opposite it over the smaller front wheels allowed two extra passengers. The teamster's seat was removable, allowing a passenger to either hold the reins from the comfortable bench, or have a driver sit up on the high, hard seat reigning the horses. Rigging for either single horse or team came with it. My horse was not trained to pull a carriage, but our friend Lucien's father had suitable horses and was an expert coachman.

Riding in Southern France's Camargue

Another distance ride was not in the cards for 1953, so I settled for an abbreviated version. The group of friends was ready for an affordable adventure. We sent Heini's younger brother Niggi to Sainte Marie de la Mer by bicycle one week ahead of the rest. He was supposed to look for horses to rent. On the way he lost his dad's movie camera but claimed he was held-up and robbed. When we reached the Rhone River Delta we found him in front of the "Café de la Paix" enjoying the sunshine and a "pastice" brandy. Our two



tents were set up in the sand dunes along the beach. Almost daily we rented small white Camarque horses and rode, sometimes "in formation" much to the amusement of the tour guide. He was used



to other tourists who collected flamingo feathers as good luck charms. We met long time local people who told us of the history of the Provence region and their own "Provençal" language, similar to Spain's "Catalan". Madame Astruc and her retired dentist husband lived in the middle of the small town in an old whitewashed rock house. Germaine Gorlier, probably in her mid thirties, hand-read all of us our future, gypsy style. Germaine's family vacationed in an abandoned World War Two bunker overlooking the shore of the Mediterranean.

A real Belgian prince lived in a "cabane", sickly and sort of exiled. Here he could drink himself stupid without embarrassing his royal family back in Belgium. From time to time we beach bums were invited to his parties, maybe because I brought the banjo and we would sing. Wine and liquor flowed freely. I remember the prince's live-in woman friend warning against too much hard liquor drinking,

saying "Kinder, Kinder, euer Leber!" (Children, give your liver a rest!).

Leaving Home, the World is Calling

I am happy but restless. Western Canada has an oil boom and the Government is encouraging qualified immigrants who will work in the West. I inquire and am told they need equipment operators. Of course I can do that, but they want proof. A foreman of Musfeld

Company is sent to watch me operate a cable type bulldozer and certify me. He does and I am issued visa XU 422 on March 8, 1954 with the note "Bulldozer operator, construction worker, Edmonton" with a one year expiration date.

To leave Rapp AG in harmony, I promise to train my successor Paul Strub in all the specialty work we do, especially cost estimating for that work. Then Swissboring Overseas Ltd. of Zurich advertises openings for drillers, technicians and engineers. I am hired and told I would be sent to Argentina after learning their specialty drilling work in Switzerland. I leave home not realizing that I will never permanently live there again. First they send me for training to Lausanne on the shores of Lake Geneva where we drill 8 ft. diameter foundation caissons for a high rise department store. Next I go to Palagnedra and Mauvoisin Dams in the Swiss Alps to learn diamond drilling on the latest "Grealius" high speed hydraulic drill rigs. I buy a set of phonograph records to learn Spanish and pin a large map of Argentina to the door of the dorm room. My roommate is an Austrian who has been waiting for an overseas assignment for several months. We work 12 hour shifts portal-to-portal six days a week, alternating days and nights every other week.



Construction Camp at Mauvoisin

After three weeks of work a clerk shows up in the tunnel in the middle of the shift with a note for me: "stop work at once and come to the office". I scramble to find another operator to take my place. At the office the project manager tells me to pack up everything and drive to the company main office in Zurich right away, but does not know or say what it is about. So I drive there overnight. In the conference room I meet a gentleman, Mr. Langer, who speaks English to me but with an even worse German accent than mine. He obviously does so to test me. Then comes the bombshell: "Pakistan!" I know where that country is and he explains what the company is doing there. Then he tries to scare me by saying "some project sites are only accessible on foot, on horseback or by camel. On some sites you may not have electricity and have to live in tents. It is a 36 month contract, but if you live in tents or without electricity it counts as a "hardship post"

and you get two months credit for one month work. The living conditions do not scare me; on the contrary, it sounds like an adventure. The contract also has a clause requiring me to learn the local language and pass periodic exams. I sign the contract, get vaccinations against several tropical diseases at the University of Basle's "Tropics Institute", obtain a Pakistani visa and pick up my departure papers from the Swiss civil and military authorities. I leave Zurich for Karachi on a British Overseas Airlines Corporation airplane on September 18th 1954 at 3 PM with two mid-size suitcases containing all I think I will need, including leather riding boots and my tuxedo.

Part Three

Working in Pakistan and India for Swiss Companies

The British Labour Party was in a hurry to see Crown Colony India achieve independence as promised within the British Commonwealth in 1947 and leave it to its own devices. Gandhi and Jinnah and their parties were expected to share power and form a coalition government. Unfortunately this did not happen. The majority Hindu population formed Hindustan at the center of the subcontinent, and the Muslims chose to form their separate nation: Pakistan. It consisted of West Pakistan and East Pakistan (which later became Bangladesh) at the extreme west and east ends of the subcontinent, separated by India. This sudden "Partition" caused much avoidable bloodshed, riots and hardships, as attested to by millions of refugees on both sides of the new borders. Seven years later I still found signs of that disruption and many remnants of the old colonial days in the customs, way of life, administration and society in general.

Transcontinental flying in propeller airplanes powered by piston engines was both more luxurious and more primitive than now. This was my first commercial flight. Like from France and Ireland, I wrote "reports" home from Pakistan. Without those I could probably not remember all the events. I have translated a shortened version of my original "reports". They represent the fresh experiences, thoughts and views of a twenty five year old in the mid 1950's.



My Mother and me. I am ready to depart

Letter from Karachi, Pakistan September 1954

After a short meeting at Swissboring Overseas Ltd's main office in Zurich we drive to Kloten for departure. I am not restless or anxious, but still feel a bit of vaccination fever. Most passengers had boarded in London, making Zurich just a stop on their way to Rome. This Zurich Airport is really the ultimate in modern airport design, with clean facilities and friendly service. Even the baggage handlers are friendlier than on railway stations. The plane is a six engine machine with every imaginable comfort. The flight to Rome has all seats occupied. I sit at a window up front, where the engine noise is less than in the back, but the view is obstructed by the wings. I see my parents wave as we taxi away, but do not know if they see me waving back.

Before takeoff we are given cotton balls for our ears and hard candy to suck on, to reduce discomfort of the pressure change. As soon as we are airborne the stewardess hands out complimentary cigarettes and cups of tea. The view of the landscape around Zurich is fantastic,

only to be outdone by the view of the Alps. I walk to the glass enclosed lounge at the back of the plane, sit in an upholstered chair and take pictures of the 180 degree view. In front of every seat are pamphlets, brochures and of course the infamous barf bags. A tiny lamp is over each seat to illuminate exactly what the passenger reads and there are tiny blower jets for directed ventilation. Chairs can be reclined and pillows or blankets are available.

Tea, coffee, wine, ice water, fruits, biscuits or chocolates can be ordered anytime and will be served promptly. Of course, being a British plane, it is mostly tea and biscuits that are ordered. Papers and magazines are exclusively English. The flight over the Alps is a unique experience; towns and farms are visible like miniatures, all in the most beautiful late afternoon sunshine. We look down on white clouds and the glaring white of snow fields and glaciers, changing from green to blue hues as we pass over them, framed by dark shadows of gorges and valleys. As the sun sets I see the Alps glowing red in the far distance. Below us is the fertile plain of the Po River with roads and even cars visible. We fly at 19,000 feet altitude with 250 miles per hour speed. Some air turbulence makes the plane slide sideways and slump a few times then rise again, not abruptly or hard like a train or ship but softly swaying like if it danced a tango. Reminds me of the slow waltz "ich tanze mit Dir in den Himmel hinein" (I am dancing with you into the heavens). The other passengers are relaxed and in the mood for a Roman holiday.

The steward announces that we will land in Rome in a few minutes. Landing smoothly we coast to the airport buildings and get out for a short stop and a snack. This is obviously not Switzerland. All sorts of sloppily uniformed characters hang around the lobby, whether porters, airline personnel or police officers is hard to tell. Three of them are strolling arm-in-arm toward the restaurant. One of them gives the other a friendly slap so that his cap falls off. He gets kicked in return, then they link arms again and disappear laughing and skipping like little boys.

The cabin looks and feels different after Rome. Vacationers have been replaced by Egyptian and Asian passengers. We receive menu cards with a great selection. I choose a Campari, melon with dried meat, soup, lobster, chicken, potatoes and string beans; afterwards a whisky soda (only Scotch, no Irish or Bourbon available). Wines and spirits are plentiful and free. I fall asleep and wake up as we are on final approach to Cairo. Parts of the city are well lit and we see streets lined with palm trees, large white mansions lit by floodlights, formal gardens and ponds. But there are other parts with sparse bluish light and row upon row of long roofs, military barracks. Still other parts are poor sections with few, weak lights and flickering flame-lit one-room hovels. We fly lower and lower until we land and taxi to the terminal. "Welcome to Egypt" says the neon sign but the few British passengers are not sure if this includes them. The ground crews are unfriendly, unkempt and sloppy. Some young people hanging around the concourse look old, emaciated and vice-ridden.

Glad to leave, we embark for take off to our next stop: Basra. I wake up at local time 5 AM but outside its already full daylight. The cabin is dark because the curtains are drawn. Below us is the desert, yellow, white, someplace reddish, with dunes and rock outcrops but no visible vegetation. It is uninhabited land seldom traveled even by nomads who cannot find enough food for their sheep herds and camels. I walk up to the cockpit and watch the copilot while the pilot sleeps; then I go back to sleep for another hour in my comfortable recliner.

The land below us has changed, some houses, herds, plants and even trees, mostly palms. Passengers awake and get tea, coffee or soft drinks. I smoke one of the cigarettes to break the

monotony. Then I see the Euphrates River, both banks full of green vegetation, some of the oldest irrigation systems in the world, warehouses and a landing strip. Basra is an impoverished small city with an austere airport. Soon we take off again across the Persian Gulf eastward to Karachi. The passengers are now mostly Asians. Flying over the ocean is dull; only a few times do we spot land in the distance.

As we approach Karachi I am back in the rear lounge taking pictures. The city itself is inland of the airport so that I can only see the Port of Karachi and some warehouses. The landing is smooth and the airport buildings are quite modern and much cleaner than I expected. Border policemen in clean uniforms look professional and dignified. I have been able to look around the city for two days now thanks to the company car and its driver. Tomorrow I start working.

Work in Karachi - October 1954

My stay here is temporary. The company has several projects coming up, most of them financed by the USA Government through its "Point Four" foreign aid plan. I will probably be sent to either Chittagong in East Bengal or to Lahore in West Punjab. In the meantime, I help with cost estimating and work on the construction of a dry-dock for Karachi harbor. A multi-tiered well-point dewatering system makes this huge, deep excavation in beach sand possible. Office work and other routine chores help me get to know from the inside how this organization works. It is a cushy job, no hardship here!

My daily routine is like this: early morning I am awakened in my hotel room by a knock on the door. Half asleep I stumble to open it and a "bearer" (food servant) comes in with a tray of morning tea, says "salaam sahib" and quickly leaves. A sip of tea wakes me up from the inside and I get up a few minutes later. The sun is already high and hot as I go to the dining room for breakfast, dressed in khaki pants and shirt. Jackets, white shirts and ties are reserved for evenings or weekends. Fish, mutton, eggs, toast, butter, marmalade and fruits are available, with tea rather than coffee.

About eight the company driver picks me and sometimes a co-worker up for the trip to the office, located in the modern business section of the city. Ceiling fans keep the air circulating when it gets hot. At ten we are served tea or lemonade with crackers and fruit at the work desk. At 1 PM we are driven back to the hotel for lunch: chicken curry, fish, mutton stew or hard boiled eggs with rice, cucumber salad and vegetables in season. After lunch we go back to our rooms for a one hour nap. By three o'clock we are back in the office for another three hours of work. Instead of office work I sometimes take a taxi to the jobsite at the dry-dock.

This is the tropics where the sun sets early. By 8 PM it is night. In the hotel, most guests, Pakistani and foreigner alike, observe the old colonial tradition: "no brown after six". We change to white trousers and a fresh shirt with tie for dinner. About 7 PM a turbaned bearer walks through the halls and around the garden beating a three-tone gong, the signal that dinner is ready. Weather is pleasant in October and we may go to the "Permit Room" (a bar for permit holders only) for an alcoholic drink or sit on its fenced lawn under the palm trees. Scotch is the tradition, on the rocks or with soda. Gin or vodka is also on hand, but if you should order anything else then better ask for the head waiter to find out if they stock it.

Weekends are on Friday in the Islamic tradition. I relax, go swimming in the pool and learn to play tennis. I also meet other Swiss in the Swiss Society Club. We ride together to Hawks Bay about 30 miles away, a beach where they also hold social events. I play soccer with some of the younger members on the beach without umpire or keeping score. A vendor comes by and offers camel rides but "my" camel gets up before I am in the saddle and I roll in the sand to everybody's amusement. I suspect this was pre-arranged! Most Swiss work for Volkert Trading, banks or the consulate. Hors d'oeuvres include ham or salami sandwiches. Pork and alcohol are generally not available in the country because of the Muslim prohibition of them, but can be obtained in a Greek-owned store or shipped to the consulate with diplomatic immunity. I ride back early morning and see daybreak for the first time here.

Appendix Operation and Trip to Bannu, NWFP - November 1954

I have had a light fever and stomach ache for a few days and now it is getting worse, much worse. Products of Basle's Pharmaceutical Industry keep me going. Then I walk to the nearby doctor's office and he has me transported at once to the modern, American-run Seventh Day Adventist hospital where they separate me from my appendix on the 26th of October. A week of recuperation makes me ready for the trip north.

The train leaves Karachi Main Station at 8 PM but I miss it because of a traffic tie-up. The cab driver races to Karachi Cantonment Station outside the city and stops near the front of the train. The steam locomotive has already started to roll but the engineer slows it down so that I can jump in. My baggage is thrown through the door as the train gathers speed. I have a reserved berth in a first class roomette that sleeps two or seats six, with private toilet and shower. Travelers bring their own large bedroll: waterproof canvas outside, with mattress, bed sheets, mosquito net and pillow all rolled inside. The cots have only webbing which is easy to keep clean or change from time to time. The coaches are recent modern imports from France but the windows must have been designed with clean electric locomotives in mind. They let coal soot and smoke from the steam engine into the compartment. I still feel a little pain from the operation.

As day dawns I shower, shave and buy breakfast from a vendor at the next station. A young major of the Pakistan Army joins me in the roomette for a few stations. We introduce ourselves and he welcomes me to his country, saying: "engineers are needed but journalists are not". He is intelligent, speaks perfectly English with that typical Indian accent, and is quite talkative. I learn a lot of facts that help me understand the country and its people better. After a while he stands in the corner and I am quiet because he probably says his prayers.

The landscape outside is a dry, hot desert interrupted from time to time by an irrigated, fertile river plain where plowed fields stretch from the banks to the nearby hills. Caravans of nomads with camels, donkeys, sheep and goats cross the tracks. They use no wheels at all and cover 500 miles or more each year. Most streams, called "nallahs" are dry except while it rains. In Bahawalpur more passengers come into our compartment, all well educated and interesting. The first question of a stranger is like in France and Ireland: "how do you like the country?" It is too early for me to tell, but I am polite. The second question "how do you like the girls?" is unthinkable and never asked. This is not France or Ireland.

We cross a swampy region where the train barely crawls. Must be bad soil and track conditions. Then we cross the Sutlej River on a bridge five times as long as the river is wide. I can imagine how this river looks in flood stage. The name of the Punjab province derives from its five rivers, "punj" means five, where fertile plains are irrigated by modern, wide canals. Prehistoric irrigation ditches are also still in use today. I step outside at every stop to breathe smoke-free air. I notice that two of the gentlemen from our compartment walk to the next coach and talk through the window to their wives. Women can vote in elections, but not travel with their husbands in the same coach. They have their own coaches where men are not admitted, not even railroad personnel.

It is 5 PM and the shadows are already three times as long as the standing people. Soon it will be night again. Sunset is a fantastic show, half the sky blends from bright yellow to orange to deep red. Then almost suddenly it is night. Engines and train crews are regularly changed every 8 hours. Trees are taller, the fields more frequent and villages fly by every few miles. I sleep a few hours and then we arrive in Lahore, the largest city in Pakistan. I have a 45 minute train change. A Swiss accountant of the company meets me for a quick dinner, interrupted by the steam whistle. I grab a bag of food and run. During these stops I never worry about my baggage left in the compartment. The railroad police would not allow thieves to get into the secure coaches. I am alone in the compartment and sleep while we pass through Rawalpindi. By 8 AM we arrive in Peshawar, the end of the rail-line. I get out of the train and have the two light suitcases and the bedroll brought to a "Tonga" (single-axle horse-drawn hackney) by a porter. It is the custom to hire a "bearer" (porter) and not carry your own, not because I am tired or weak but because these workers live from carrying suitcases and they have families to feed. I am brought to the bus station.

In the far distance I see the snow covered Karakoram Range shining in the bright sun, with the 26,700 feet high Nanga Parbat peak. The Pamir area, source of the Yarkand River is reached over the 13,000 feet high Baroghil Pass. The border of Soviet Union's Tadjikistan is only 190 miles and China's Sinkiang Province only 290 miles away "as the crow flies". There are actually lots of crows, but I doubt that they would fly there! The air is cool and clean, much like in the Alps, with forested foothills close by.

Boarding the government bus requires showing my letter of introduction with pass photo, stamps and several signatures. It is written by typewriter in the Urdu language using Arabic characters. I can not read it but had it translated.

It allows me not only to ride in government buses and airplanes, but also to stay in government owned rest houses and obtain military or police assistance when needed. We drive south all day through a 100 mile mountain range past Kohat to Bannu. The three-tone horn is blaring when we pass caravans or other vehicles. A large sign announces "Entering Tribal Territory". At a roadblock overlooked by a fort, we are checked by uniformed "Frontier Scouts" in gray,



Tribal guards

traditional baggy pants, loose shirts, turbans, rifles and ammunition bandoleers, a local militia commanded by Pakistan Army officers.

The North West Frontier Province (NWFP) is populated by Pathan tribes, some nomadic and some settled. These are tall, healthy people, a few with blue and green eyes. Alexander the Great came through here and is called "Iskander" in the local Pashtu language. Towns are walled and look like fortresses. A few cities and the roads between them are controlled by the "scouts". The rest of the territory is tribal area, off limits except with an armed escort. Bannu is a large city and marketplace. Outside of the city is the cantonment, a military and government enclave surrounded by barbed wire and patrolled day and night. It has paved streets, concrete sidewalks, barracks and nice bungalows with lawns and flower beds.

Several "rest houses" in smaller cities without hotels are a remnant of colonial times, but still very much in use by traveling government executives, officers and judges. "Dak bungalows" are for postal executives. "Cirquit houses" are for judicial officials and judges. Public Works Department (PWD), railroad and army also maintain rest houses. My letter of introduction entitles me to use any of them on a "space available" basis, so if one is fully occupied I can try another. Most have a permanent set of three servants: the "Khansamah" (cooking bearer), "Mali" (sweeper-gardener) and "Chukeedar" (watchman). They vary in comfort from primitive to luxurious. Every guest must give a posted amount of money to the cook so he can buy food, and leave a preset tip for the other servants when leaving. Most rest houses have a bookshelf where guests can take a book if they leave another book. This is very interesting and I read a lot everywhere I go. There are old books by Kipling, Hemingway or Agatha Christie in English; others are in Urdu or even Hindi. Local maps, statistics, geology, reports of constructed projects etc are on "do not remove" status. Long discussions with other guests help me understand the country better.

Why am I here? The Public Works Department (PWD) is building the Barran Dam, a one mile long 80 feet high earth-fill structure, using US aid funds made available through the "Foreign Aid Organization". Swissboring does pressure grouting of the foundation rock below the dam and I will be in charge of that short, specialized portion of construction. It's a small world! Guess who is the design engineer? None other than Gruner Brothers of Basle Switzerland, my former employer. Their two engineers Messrs. Wackernagel and Freeman welcome me like the old friend I am. So we Swiss are fifty percent of the total of six foreigners in this city. The two friends tell me I should attend a party tonight with sit-down dinner where "tout Bannu" is invited. Well, tired or not, I will go to get acquainted with the society.

The host is a high ranking officer, and most of the 30 male guests can speak English to us but change to Urdu or Pashtu among themselves. It is said that the ladies are also having a party in a nearby building but we can not see them. Food is served by uniformed waiters with tall turbans standing behind each guests' chair. Chicken curry, lentils, beans, flatbread and many other local specialties are served. Porcelain plates still show British style decorations. Green tea, also called caravan tea, is served. Folk dances (Kattack) are performed by a group of men. Music is performed by other men on strange, traditional instruments. It is late night as we walk with our armed escort over to our PWD bungalow. Logs are burning in the fireplace and we enjoy a whisky before turning in. Next day work begins.

The Barran Dam is just one part of the multi-purpose Kurram Ghari Scheme, a string of dams, diversion weirs and canals to control flooding and deliver water during the dry season. My work has a similar purpose as in Palagnedra and Mauvoisin: to stop water from leaking through cracks in the dam foundation. But here I do not run the drilling rig but am the project engineer. What a difference in the conditions and methods! No high-speed diamond drilling, just old, worn-out, belt driven machines that could no longer compete in Europe. Earthmoving is done by donkey and compaction by men manually tamping the clay core. I consider myself a technician, but the company introduces and invoices me as an engineer. OK with me. Work starts at dawn while it is cool and lasts until about 3 PM when it is hot even in October. We are driven by a military driver in a US war surplus jeep to and from work. We eat lunch from the "Tiffin Carrier", a stack of aluminum cans with a handle, and go back to our quarters well before dusk.

This schedule leaves a lot of time for paperwork, and I use some of it to study another correspondence course from the Swiss "Institute Technique Supérieur", learning what I have not learned before and sending the completed homework back to them by airmail. Late afternoons in the shade of the large bungalow porch are pleasant but the nights are cold. I buy a battery powered "Zenith" shortwave radio the size of a small suitcase. I can tune in to two English language stations: Radio Ceylon and the American Forces Network. Indian and Pakistani stations play their own music that does not appeal to me. At dusk the generator is turned on and we have a few hours of electric light. I have a membership in the Officer's Club and go there regularly to play tennis or squash, talk about many topics with other members or visit the permit room.

This routine comes to a stop during "maneuvers". Instead of the 200 man garrison we suddenly have 5,000 troops and 2,000 police in the city. Tents all around, cavalry, horse drawn heavy artillery, motorized troops and camp followers. Every spare room in the PWD bungalow is occupied by officers and the club has standing room only at night.

Several business trips take me in all directions of the NWFP. One of them is to Quetta, the capital of Baluchistan, where a dam and spillway are planned in a nearby gorge. I report at Fort Sandeman and am driven to an outpost where I receive a horse and 5 mounted men for protection. It is always about the same in these bare hills. Dense, almost impenetrable groves of trees grow in a narrow canyon below the springs, next a little grassland, then to a rock-strewn talus slope surrounded by desert. Nomads camp on sand and rock, leaving the sparse grass for their animals to eat. A footpath leads through the thicket to the spring where a few piled rocks protect a tiny, shady pool. Wild animals, herds and people all take turns using the water. We follow well trodden trails to the site and then look around on foot. The site is good but would require an access road and a fair-sized water storage pond for drilling and later for compaction moisture control. After a few days I write my report with a sketch and return to Bannu.

A friend of mine, a police officer, takes me into the old city to visit the bazaar. This inner city, like most others in this province, used to be inhabited by Hindu merchants and craftsmen. The Pathans came to trade and then went back to their villages. Since partition most Hindus left or were forced out. Many houses are left vacant, abandoned to progressive dilapidation. I buy a souvenir and notice that the merchant gives a tip to my friend as we leave, to thank him for bringing a customer.

Most mornings at six I ride to the jobsite with three drillers / mechanics. Most of the foreign workers of Swissboring are Italians who spent decades in the former Italian colonies in

Africa before and during the war. Returning to Italy was not their choice and they jumped at the first opportunity to move out into the developing world again. Work is progressing well as an alarm is sounded. We are informed that a large caravan is approaching from the western hills and should be at the dam site in a half hour. So we sit in the shade and wait. Dozens of tribesmen with rifles come over the horizon, most on horseback, some with packhorses. The militiamen greet them and show them the way through the work area. Maybe they fear a trap, because they go instead high on the hillside in a wide curve around the work area. Behind them come camels, sheep, goats herded by women, children and large attack dogs. Tribal women are not completely covered by "burka" (black cloth from head to toe) like some women in the city, but they do cover their hair and wear long skirts. Babies are carried on the back or in baskets carried by donkeys. Tents, poles, even earthen pots are carried by the camels. I see something looking like a bagpipe and other instruments. Some armed men walk or ride alongside and a few are in the back driving the stragglers. Except for the rifles, it is a picture from biblical times passing by our machines, and after the "all clear" we go back to work.

Down in the Indus Valley - January 1955

Orders from Karachi make me leave Bannu to start a new project that has just been awarded to the company. I would have loved to stay but must leave one early, cold morning.



Kalabagh on the Indus

Irrigated fields below Bannu stretch for a few miles then give way to desert. I hope this picture will change when the dam is finished and water is flowing in large, new canals.

The narrow gauge railroad brings me through a mountain range with many primitive coalmines into the fertile Indus Valley. The river is a mile wide, slow moving with deep blue water. I have not seen this much water in a long time. Kalabagh, a fortified town on the west bank is connected by a railroad bridge and ferry to Mariindus high on the other bank. I change to a Northwest Railway sleeper coach and sleep until we reach Lahore at 9 AM the next morning. The

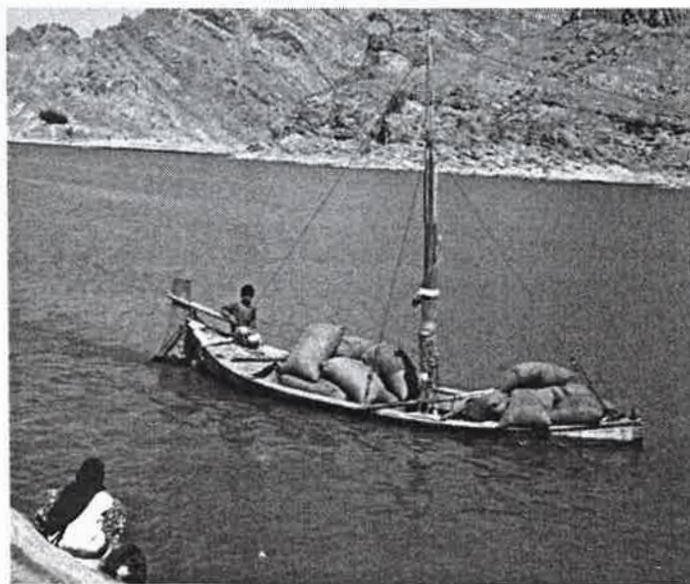
wind has blown fine sand into the compartment and everything is covered with a coating thick enough to scoop it up in my hands.

Since I first read Kiplings "Kim" in my boy scout days I knew of the city of Lahore and the big gun "Zam-Zammah". Now I visit the historic artifact in person. It is still there. I stay at the "Falletti Hotel", the best in the city if not in the whole of Pakistan. Our company branch office and equipment yard is nearby. One of the older mechanic foremen of Swissboring is Mr. Urillio. We talk about this and that and it turns out that he comes from Albiolo. He knows the Broggi family and has heard of two orphan boys leaving for Switzerland but that was long before his time. He even heard that both made a good life there, one in business and the other as a master builder. I use my free day to visit the famous 15th century gardens, the Red Fort and ancient "shish mahal" (mirror palace). I also watch a polo game and a horse race. The easy life lasts only a few days, then I am on my way again.

The Northwest Railway takes me back to the Indus Valley. Daudkhel is an industrial complex under construction, officially a fertilizer factory but, as we all know, explosives and fertilizers are cousins. The payroll clerk of the company meets me at the railroad station and drives me to the "government rest house" in Mariindus. The first drill site is on a steep, treeless gravel bank high above the river's flood plain. I look around the site late in the day and it turns dark soon after sunset. Then I see a light on the eastern horizon as if it was a large city. The light turns reddish and then the moon rises, blood red, oval and huge, lifting itself slowly off the ground. Hills and dunes show shifting orange shapes until the moon turns yellow and then white. The desert can be very beautiful and I hope to see many full moons here in the months to come.

It is customary that I have a servant and I hire a former soldier from Bannu with good references; Mirdaraz, a bit older than I. He is considered a "cooking bearer", can drive and fix the jeep and will help with those chores fit for his caste. Muslims in general do not have the Indian caste system, but Pakistani Muslims have lived among Hindus for so many centuries that some of it has unfortunately rubbed off. A bearer usually does not cook and vice versa. As a cooking bearer he makes a few exceptions, like lighting coals in the fireplace but he would certainly not take anything spilled off the floor. This is "sweeper" work, the lowest caste. He loves to go shopping with me because there is usually a tip from the shop owner for him, but at one place he refuses to enter, saying only "Yahudi" (Jewish) and remains outside.

Project management of the Daudkhel complex is by a Belgian firm and their engineers prefer to talk French not English. There are also German engineers here and Swissboring's personnel speak almost exclusively Italian. Urdu is the language I am learning as required by my contract. At times the language confusion assumes Babylonian dimensions! More government officials arrive, and I must move from Mariindus across the Indus River to Kalabagh. A German friend helps me find a room in the bungalow of the Salt Mining Company. To



get to the jobsite I hire a row boat ferry service. The half hour boat ride each morning and evening is a special pleasure. Mirdaraz rides with me sometimes but will not touch the oars, because that would be beneath his status. Evening with dinner on the river bank is relaxing and at night I continue to study my correspondence course.

I am invited to meet the Navab of Kalabagh for tea in his palace. He is an older gentleman, schooled in England, a charming conversationalist, race horse breeder and hunter. The palace is surrounded by a garden where many flowers are cultivated, the most famous being a "black" rose that is in bloom at Christmas time. I am allowed to briefly ride one of his geldings, probably so he can see if I can really ride. The brood mares are especially valued and not shown. For Christmas I am with a German family. Mr. Bismark is an architect building the housing section of the factory. A tamarisk branch serves as Christmas tree, with candles as decorations. Their children, Wolfgang 2, and Inge 4 years old, are happy with the Swiss chocolate I give them. We sing along with my ukulele and the parents are glad to have a German speaking friend to play with the children and tell them fairy tales.

Is this an "Adventure"? - Daudkhel, March 1955

The Industrial Complex of Daudkhel is now a beehive of activity. Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation (PIDC) has given the fertilizer production every priority. Raw material mining can not be far behind. We have to bid some exploratory drill holes in the road-less wilderness mountains, but first I have to see how that terrain looks and if we can find water. Geological exploration has been done in the 1930's but its results are sketchy. I am called to Karachi to prepare for the site visit. I ride by jeep to Lahore and enjoy a night in the Faletti Hotel. Mirdaraz drives me to the airport, a former military facility now serving civilians as well, austere but clean and well kept. No broken glass, missing door handles or bailing wire repairs like in "Cairo International".

An older "Dakota" airplane takes me to Karachi where I arrived five months ago. I stay at the Beach Luxury Hotel, newly built and modern. A French band plays dance music for the many Europeans and few Pakistanis, male and female, who are allowed and willing to dance in public. It is only three days later that I have to leave again with all the maps and geological data obtained from different agencies and a letter directing the trip by the PIDC main office. This time I hate to leave the easy life. Flying back is a wonderful trip with views of the desert, the rivers and towns framed by high mountains in the far distance. Deep green vegetation made possible by gravity irrigation fades to a lighter green where canals end. Fields are small enclaves within the vast desert. Free flowing canals are the rule and practically no pumped water is available for irrigation.



Resting before the trip

Back in Daudkhel we assemble the group to go with me. An army clerk / translator, a sergeant and six armed scouts come along in two Mercedes Unimog all-terrain vehicles. Before dawn we leave westward into a valley that gets narrow within a few miles. Nomads camp there and they rent us two donkeys, a big dog and a young tribesman to lead them. The trail would lead to a pass, but we must branch off to the north and that is as far as rubber tires can take us. Two men stay by the vehicles as guards. The sergeant takes some crucial bolts off the vehicles and keeps them in his pocket. We hike for four hours and then make camp near a spring. Flatbread is baked and I have some American combat ration cans. The Indus Valley is visible in the distance until the sun sets. I sleep in my bedroll under a tarp and wake up in the middle of the night. There are loud voices and something is the matter. I find that two more tribesmen came unannounced to help their buddy. They surprised the guards who almost fired on them. Back to sleep until 5 AM and then hike through the wilderness on foot to find the first projected drill site. An old military map shows houses but we only find burned out ruins. Burned or not, these people must have had water. We find a possible seasonal spring but it is just a trickle now in March. I take pictures and make sketches. Binoculars, altimeter and compass are essential. We reach a high plateau where a horse could cover a day's hike in an hour. Returning three hot days later, we find the guards relaxing in the shade of a hut they built with branches and twigs. The trip back to Daudkhel is uneventful.

Facts of Life for Construction Workers

Companies engaged in construction and especially specialty subcontractors anywhere in the world have the same problem: resource leveling during feast or famine. It is facetiously said: "you never need one drill rig; you need either three or none!" So what do you do when you need "none"? It is the same for machines and for people. What can long term employees do between jobs? Estimating and bidding new jobs is one thing they could do if they knew how. I suspect that one of the reasons I was hired is my added background in cost estimating. As a young bachelor I am moved from job to job and called away often to look for new work. Being moved is inconvenient but not all bad for my career and experience. Anyway, "lament is unprofessional!" After four months in Daudkhel comes my next move, but first I take some days off as overtime compensation.

The Highest Valley - Gilgit, May 1955

Gilgit is in Northern Kashmir, a region also called Baltistan, the highest part of the Indus Valley at the feet of the Karakoram Range. For those looking at a map, the coordinate point is 35 degrees 50 minutes North / 74 degrees 20 minutes East, altitude 6,000 feet. I worked last week in our Rawalpindi office and am now taking a few days off. The Ministry for Kashmir Affairs has issued me a permit to visit this restricted area. I board an army freight plane. Cameras are kept by the pilot during the flight and only returned after landing. The pilot follows the Indus River to Chitral and then just barely drags the plane over a 12,200 feet high pass. I look up to the mountains on either side of the plane. This is higher, wilder, and grander than I have seen over the Alps. The tree line must be over 12,000 feet altitude, because fir and pine forests cover the lower areas, tapering off into isolated groves of few, short trees and brush. The ground is deeply snow covered except for some south facing cliffs. I am allowed to stand behind the pilot in the cockpit and see the peaks of K2 and Nanga Parbat ten miles away, both wearing a wispy cloud cap. The flat valley bottom is irrigated by canals. Above the canal level are terraced dry farms

made possible by collection systems and a little rain throughout the year. Gilgit City has a large garrison and 2,000 inhabitants. The market place is surrounded by walls.

A seldom used government rest house is my lodging for the next week. Since partition seven years ago it has fallen into disrepair. Fruit trees are in full bloom, reminding me of Switzerland. The men in town are olive skinned, about like I am in summer, stocky, with brown or black hair and many have blue or green eyes. Those I see or meet make a healthy impression. Unfortunately there are also signs of in-breeding, as could be expected in such isolated places. Some look like Tibetans, others like Tadjiks but very few like Pathans or Punjabis, except for the soldiers. Buddhist prayer flags decorate some rocks and hills. This year a Swiss expedition will try to climb the Rakkaposhi Peak and their porters will be recruited from this area. Swedish explorer Sven Hedin assembled his expedition here in 1906 before crossing the Himalaya into Central Asia. Small, tough ponies are used as pack animals instead of mules because they are said to be more sure-footed on the steep, narrow trails. Porters carry their load on back bags or frames hung from their forehead not the shoulders like a "rucksack". Camels are only used in the flat valley bottom.

Two other foreigners arrive, an Englishman who speaks the local language and an American. I am glad, because it is much more fun to explore the area as a group. The sky is cloudless and deep blue. Music is heard from town and we find a small band with strange instruments including a kind of short Alphorn and some drums in the marketplace. They shout loudly that tomorrow will be a polo game and the music is to draw attention to this announcement. Everybody we talk to tells us the polo sport has originated in this valley in ancient times. Why should I doubt it? We watch the polo match between different scout teams. They ride fast and wild, sometimes clinging to the neck or side of the horse. Spectators shout and jump for joy when their team scores. They must have some rules but I see no umpire. During intermission we enjoy folk dances similar but softer than what I remember from Bannu. Some dancers are quite small and wear exotic wooden masks. Whispered rumor says they are women. It could be true, but their "forms" are well concealed.

The sun is not visible, somewhere behind the mountains. As it gets darker the Muslims pray and the others are just resting quietly so as not to disturb them. We learn of a custom: should one Muslim challenge another during the fast-month in the narrow valleys that the sun has not yet set, he must throw a rock as high in the air as he can. The other must say if he can still see it at its highest point. If "no" it proves the sun has set. I observe the prayers and find there are different customs. Two soldiers, said to be Christians, do not pray but keep playing cards. Loud noise resumes as night comes, not as suddenly as in the flatland. It is so cold at night that farmers fear for their fruit trees. Next morning we see no frost, just frosty dew on the trees.

We leave early by jeep for Kanga Valley. Snowmelt makes every stream a raging river with ice cold water looking milky. Banks are washed out and trees uprooted along the road. In a narrow passage the road is blocked by an earth slide. We walk from here onward, following the jeep driver to a group of houses on a sunny bench high above the stream. Tiny terraced fields already sprout some green plants but the snow is only a few hundred feet above. A Buddhist hermit monk is begging. I give him a rupee. This must be more than expected and I get lots of blessings for such an enormous gift. Most houses are under the protection of huge rocks and resemble the hut I lived in on the alp above Giswil in Switzerland. Door posts and lintels have intricate wood carved ornaments, triangles, swastikas, zigzags or crosses. We are allowed to enter

one of the houses and I find it so familiar I tell my friends of the resemblance. After a sack lunch we notice clouds building up and are urged to hurry down the hill and back to Gilgit. The evening rain finds us safe and dry on the veranda of our rest house.

The days fly by with trips to Hunza, Skardu and other places, when word comes that the plane will leave next morning. We pack our bags and board the plane for the trip back to Rawalpindi. The flight is choppy but the view is worth any discomfort. The vivid memory of the last few days keeps me awake at night. Too many new impressions run around in my brain. But work is waiting and I have to focus forward.

I am omitting some of my reports describing work sites and experiences that are rather repetitive. They were important at the time, to let my parents know where I was but do not belong here.

Big City Life - Lahore, June 1955

Swissboring's office is in a new building at the edge of the city. A driver drives the company Hudson automobile, advertised as "the car you step down into", with room for six, comfortable, a far cry from the jeeps. I am the junior in this office in more ways than one. First, I have not yet been introduced to customers and agencies in the city. Second, I am the youngest and third, I am single. The current projects are far flung: Jhelum, Kohat, Daudkhel and Jaranwala. I still travel to locations where future jobs are bid, but for at least a month I "hang my hat" in Lahore and after lunch on Saturday I wash off the dust of work and clear any thoughts of work out of my brain.

The Griffiths Institute Club

One suburb of Lahore is Moghalpura, built decades ago as a government housing development on both sides of a slow moving, tree lined canal. Today it is mostly inhabited by Christians, middle and upper level "Anglo-Indian" civil service employees of government, railroads and postal service. Two churches are full every Sunday and I attend Catholic Mass regularly. The center of family social life is the Griffins Institute Club. Every Saturday night is bingo, called "housie" here, with everybody participating. Children barely old enough to know the numbers with teenagers, parents and grandparents around the table, all excited to fill their card, jump up and shout "housie!" Then the 6 man band plays modern tunes for ballroom dancing. Yes real, normal dance where men and women hold each other and rhythmically shuffle or twirl to music in public! I can do that quite well, but with whom? That is the "grand prize" of the event: there are well chaperoned young, unmarried women willing to dance with strangers if politely asked!

Dress for men is "Sunday best" always with tie, but in summer without jacket. Ladies wear whatever was fashionable in England last year. Hardly a Punjabi dress or sari is seen. All conversation is English and never loud. A grandmother may say something hushed in Urdu to a toddler but hopes nobody hears it. The younger children may speak Urdu in the home but she would not want her neighbors to know that. Every newcomer is subject to gossip. Manners and background are whispered about. A permit room sells hard liquor but is socially, not legally, off limits to females. After several hours of Foxtrot, English Waltz, Swing and Boogie Woogie comes 2 AM closing time. Toddlers are sleeping in their mothers' laps and it is time for the closing song. The song is always the same "be it ever so humble – there's no place like home" known by all and

sung with great emotion. If you are still on the dance floor you stand still, embracing your partner and sing or harmonize, almost like a national anthem.

Every year the Griffin's Club held judged dance competitions. One young woman I danced with often and well suggested that maybe I should dance with her in the competition instead of her regular partner. I declined as tactfully as I could, because I knew it would have been misunderstood by her community. Another time as I played bingo at her parent's table I inadvertently stuck a pencil behind my ear. She yanked it away and scolded me in whisper tone: "don't ever do that, it makes you look like a "Babu" (lowly clerk)!" Old customs die hard. We knew the words of current movie songs, like Doris Day's "little things mean a lot", the "sentimental journey" and sang along as the band played.



Returning to my room in the darkened Falettis Hotel early in the morning, I feel my way to bed without slamming the door or turning the lights on. Everybody is asleep but my thoughts are wandering. Why am I here in this godforsaken country? Is this what I want to do with my 26th-year? It is too late to go to sleep and too early to get up. Wild parrots screech outside and Sunday morning is dawning.

The Gymkhana Club

There is also a different social circle existing in this city: well paid foreigners of all nationalities, mostly clean-cut Americans and Europeans but also well-connected Pakistanis. The members-only Gymkhana Club is their social center and the Ghulbang suburb is where they live in modern bungalows or lavish villas. Alcohol is served anywhere in the club and there are some men and women using this to excess. I know several members from my contacts at work and am often invited to dinners and parties. We play water volley ball in the pool and go to concerts, parks and museums as a group. Most speak English but the French would rather speak French on their days off. I fit well into their circle and enjoy their company. Some may be snobs or drunks, but many are regular, nice family men working for their firm or government in this outpost for a few years, and some have good looking daughters who can dance.

Hollywood companies are filming in the country and a new movie version of the book "Bowani Junction" is rumored to come out soon. This "must-see" production is starring Ava Gardner and Stewart Granger. Movie production staff is stationed in the hotel and they give parties too, but they are a rowdy, sloppy crowd quite different from their American countrymen and families who live here.

I read the airmail edition of the Swiss "Weltwoche", the Indian "Statesman" and the "Pakistan Times" regularly, with emphasis on news about Asia. It is mostly contrary to what I

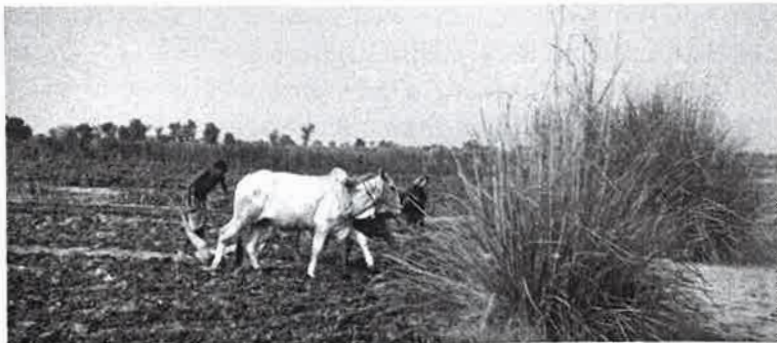
actually see and hear. How can a reporter visit three countries per week and know anything about them? Press bulletins, that's how. Press bulletins issued by the propaganda arms of governments or interest groups. The all-present communist propaganda agency pays well and "under the table" for favorable reporting. It's not easy to separate the wheat from the chaff.

One of the "clean-cut" Americans I referred to above was Mr. Miller, a civil engineer from San Francisco who worked for the US foreign aid administration and is their liaison person for most Swissboring contracts. The family lives temporarily at the Faletti's Hotel. In the course of business we get to know each other quite well, and travel to several jobsites together. I learn a lot about the US from him. Of great interest to me is the fact that, as a US resident and upon passing two exams and having the required years of professional practice, I might be issued a Professional Engineer's License by the State of California. I also teach his teenage daughter how to dance at Gymkana Club events and she is a quick-study.



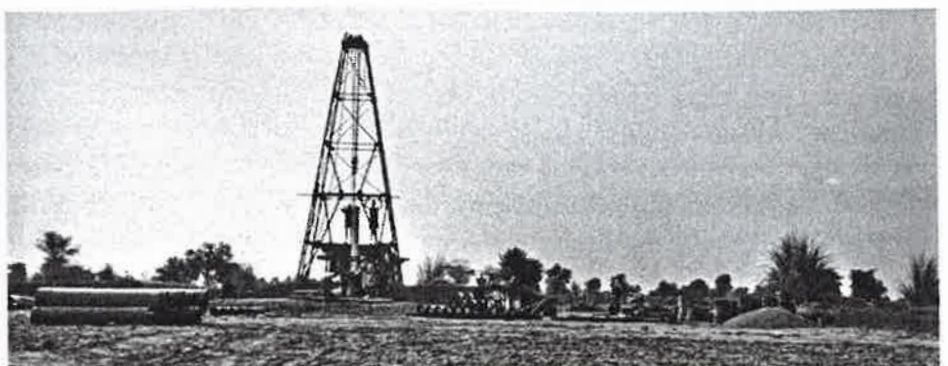
Report from Jaranwala, Punjab - September 1955

Soon after my last report from Lahore I was transferred to this project on the 10th of May and have been here for four months now. Jaranwala is located at 72 degrees 20 minutes East and 31 degrees 40 minutes North. Seventy years ago a dam and irrigation canal scheme were built, and this city was laid out on a square grid, very unusual for farming areas. The culture is still



more Hindu than Muslim, with small temples in groves of Banyan trees. Large white oxen, their bodies, hoofs and horns washed reverently every week, pull single axle carts. Un-shrouded women are working, laughing and playing with children everywhere. Mountain ranges in the west are the thinnest strip of gray on the horizon if the weather is clear. Large higherground areas can not be reached by gravity water. Watered fields with tall sugar cane and corn crops are bordered by desert just a few feet away.

To fill these gaps, we will drill



several dozen deep wells of 22 inches diameter and an average of 300 feet deep for pumped irrigation of the high ground. The rigs consist of a diesel driven double drum winch, a tall tripod and cable tools no longer used in Europe. Each crew has an Italian driller and ten or so unskilled laborers called "coolies". We work two nine hour shifts six days a week. At night and days off, a "chukeedar" (watchman) is on each site. Alongside our project are other crews employed by a government agency, with similar, government owned drill rigs. They have already stopped work because monsoon season will be coming soon, so why wait until it rains. Our living quarters are comfortable, large army tents on a hill around a nice, flat roofed mud house where we have a kitchen and small eating room. No electric power is available, except for our small gas-powered generator. Some hot nights I sleep under my mosquito net on the flat roof of the mud house, to enjoy the slight breeze.

First we notice strong hot winds and sandstorms, then dark clouds come up from the distant ocean. It is not raining yet but will be soon, so we prepare for it while we still can. Today we suddenly see the government crews starting work again and wonder why. After work we play ping pong outside our tents as a new US-aid station wagon drives up. The American from Lahore who inspects our work from time to time comes by, just in time for dinner, and he donates a bottle of whisky to be shared by all. He is a better ping pong player than most and we have a pleasant evening. I tell him that we all knew he would be coming soon. "How could you know?" he asks. I point in the direction of the government drill rig and tell him they resumed work just for the occasion. He is convinced that they could not have known he was coming because he told no one where he was going on this trip. Of course, his Pakistani driver knew. But... "no, no, he is very loyal and would not tell anyone." As he leaves the next morning I keep my thoughts to myself and wave goodbye. Once the station wagon is out of sight the government crews go home in mid morning.

Land to be irrigated by the new wells is supposed to be distributed to refugee families. Local landlords do not like that and use their influence to own it instead of the refugees. Helping the drilling effort is part of the plan to influence the government officials in their favor. The owner of the house we cook and eat in speaks some English and we are "good friends". I ask him for a rental of oxen and carts during the upcoming rains so that we can keep drilling and moving rigs while the trails are muddy. He is skeptical but gives me a price anyway. We buy rubber boots, raingear and tarps for everybody and store extra fuel and supplies on the jobsites. Engines receive a corrugated metal roof. The big question is whether the local laborers will work when it rains. I talk through an interpreter to them in groups, after they have received their pay so they are not under pressure. Some will and some will not. We promise to pay those who work the prorated wages of their buddies who do not show up, as long as they also do their work. Some grin and others frown.



The long awaited monsoon rains burst on the scene on the 19th of July with a bang. With a loud thunderstorm and heavy downpour Mother Nature lets us know: "this is it, now go home"! Trails and drill sites are under standing water. Trucks and jeeps are stuck where they happened to be when the rain came. We lose a day building

mounds and trenches around the tents and hide in the house. Next morning we start "Plan B": rubber boots and raingear are worn and one by one the crews plod through the mud to the vehicles, get them unstuck and start the diesel engines of the drill rigs. Most laborers show up and the ground one foot down is no different than during the dry season. Drill progress is just as good as before, averaging almost 60 feet per day per rig. The local "Zamindars" (land owners) are surprised to see us work. Word gets around all the way to Lahore. Our American friend sends a telegram to verify that we are really working. In the eight weeks between first and last rain we complete ten wells, moving each rig three or four times. The project will be completed by the end of September, three months ahead of schedule.

Time flies, cotton is in bloom, white or pink or even red. Pumps and distribution pipes are installed in the wells as soon as we move to the next site. Some of our systems come on line, the desert soil is plowed and row crops are planted. We celebrate the near completion of the project with beer and mixed emotions. Work has been scarce lately and the foreign aid budget has been cut. Several of us, me included, can return to Europe with full vacation and bonus, at the convenience of the company. I am young and happy. Others wonder what the future has in store for them, maybe unemployment in Italy?

My First Overseas Contract is Over

I often wondered why foreign engineers and technicians worked in Pakistan at all. Hundreds of young Pakistanis return each year from universities all over the world, laden with engineering degrees, diplomas and doctorates. Their years of schooling often exceeds that of European and American engineers. Home again, they search for "positions" in the city, not work out in the country, and many remain unemployed for years despite their family's political connections. Only our willingness to live where the work is and our impatience to see work move forward justified our presence, privileges and good pay.

My first overseas contract was over. Of course I wrote no reports about the trip home because I could tell the story when I got there. What I remember is this: in Jaranwala we had drinking water from a well, vegetables were always washed in "pinky water" (calium permanganate?) but dishwashing was done with canal water strained through a home made gauze cloth filter. I was home less than a week when I came down with a fever and had pimples all over my body. The doctor sent me to the hospital and it turned out to be a form of typhoid. Being a rare disease in Switzerland they showed me off in the auditorium of the hospital and had a question and answer session for assembled students and doctors to hear. When asked where I had stopped on the way home, I said in Aden, among other stops. Then the doctor asked: "did you eat or drink anything there?" My reply, "a double scotch and soda" caused roaring laughter and applause from the audience.

I recover quickly and go with my friends to the annual "Mardi Gras" Costume Ball of the Catholic Youth Associations. Wearing suit and tie, our group of friends goes to the ball without dates. Girls and women wear full-face masks, wigs, gloves and carnival costumes. Two of them come to our table to talk with disguised voices. Identical masks and costumes and similar voices makes it impossible to tell them apart. From their talk, we know they must be from Allschwil. Then I find a way to tell them apart: one has sturdier wrists than the other, she also is the best dancer, can harmonize well to the tunes the band plays and knows the words to many popular hit songs. At midnight they have to remove their masks and only then do we recognize them: Romana

Schaefer, my future wife (with the sturdier wrists) and her friend Marie Stampfli. For years I had known the Schaefer family, because they belonged to our parish and the three sisters sang Swiss Italian songs at community events accompanied by their father on the accordion. This was a nice evening and we are now acquainted, but other than that, we take no particular interest in each other. A few weeks later I leave again for Pakistan.

To Pakistan and India for Kabel Lasso AG

Collecting my three months' vacation pay I wasted little time before I found another company needing short term engineering and equipment installation supervision in Pakistan. They hired me right away, restoring positive cash flow after only two weeks of loafing. Several projects of Kabel Lasso AG, a small ropeway manufacturer, were in the planning stages. Priority was a portable bamboo extraction ropeway for the tropical rain forests of East Pakistan requiring shipping and then installation. A mechanic, Mr. Schneider, helped me assemble the materials which were packed and shipped to the port of Chittagong. The customer was a Papermill in Chandragona on the Karnafuli River, financed by PIDC and the World Bank. When the airline tickets arrived, his was for tourist class and mine for first class. I did not let him know of the difference because he was my friend. I would have felt like a real snob to sit in first class while my friend was in the tourist section of the same plane. The airline office informed me that I could not have a refund for the difference in class, but they agreed to give me a tourist ticket all the way to Tokyo for a vacation after work was complete at no extra cost. Copies of my letters home and thirteen reports to the company help me remember how it was.

Letter from East Bengal – Chittagong, East Pakistan, March 1956

The flight via Rome, Cairo and Basra to Karachi impresses me less than two years ago, because it has become routine. After a visit with our agent company, Willcox & Islam Ltd, my friend flies on to Dacca while I fly to Lahore. Beautiful Lahore again in full bloom, I feel almost at home here and have so many friends, acquaintances and memories. After a few days I board a ten-passenger plane for the flight to New Delhi, then by DC3 via Nagpur to Calcutta. Bengal looks so different from the Punjab, especially from an airplane at 10,000 feet altitude. Green, lush fields, wide brown rivers lapping at their banks, some flooding and the first view of the jungle. I continue to Dacca and then Chittagong where some of my Swissboring colleagues are stationed. The city center has a mix of old and new buildings, surrounded by residential sections and a belt of bamboo hut slums. Twenty five miles east is the border of Burma on top of a north-south running mountain range covered by jungles. The ship with our ropeway crates has been unloaded and we forward them up the river past the paper mill to the bamboo forests.

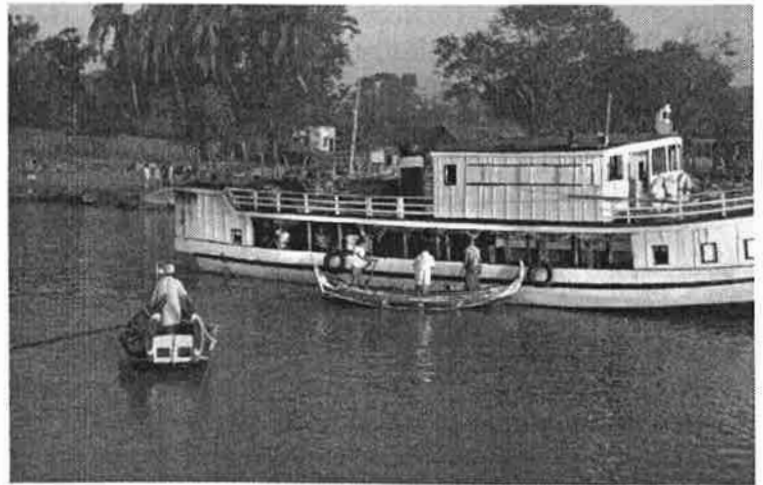
Chittagong Planters Club sits on a hill surrounded by a well kept park. Large and small tea plantations, called "tea-gardens", dot the edges of the jungle northward to Assam Province, many still cultivated by their old British owners and very well maintained. A few rupees make me a life-member of the club, but it does not make me a planter. Social life is not too different from the Clubs in Lahore but customs and dress code are even more formal. Dinner in the dining room requires a tuxedo, black jacket and tie in the cold season, white jacket ("Sharkskin") in the hot season. Eating a snack in the bar requires only a white shirt and dark tie. The membership is elderly; mostly Britons who have not yet found their way back to England. Token Pakistani members make these almost "all white" membership customs legal in the immediate post-colonial

era. I wonder if this club would have admitted my grandfathers: Camillo, the bricklayer or Albert, the cabinet maker?

One rule seems always observed: no hard liquor before sunset. Ladies and gentlemen mill around the west veranda or west facing lawn chatting while servants are busy with lounge chairs, bottles and glasses. The sun sinks early in the tropics. As the last rays fade over the horizon, everybody moves to the lawn chairs and whisky is poured. You may down a fifth of whisky at night and there will be no gossip, but take one drink during the day and you may be labeled a "drunk"! "Small talk" means: no direct, possibly embarrassing questions, only polite chitchat to your face. This helped to preserve a civil tone when the same few families were stationed together in the same small colonial outpost for many years. What is said behind your back is another matter. Gossip cannot be avoided with all those servants in and around your living quarters. From them it goes to the "mem-sahibs" (ladies) as a secret; then it spreads like wildfire.

I am anxious to move up the river and get to work. After all, this is supposed to be a short term assignment. A motorcycle-cab takes me and my baggage along the estuary to the edge of the jungle early morning. The lower Karnafuli River looks like a lake when the tide is high and only flows when it is low. Boats have a free ride fifteen miles up the river while the tide is coming in because the water is flowing seemingly

"upriver". Heavily laden junks come in from the ocean and are unloaded on small piers. Our diesel ship is anchored almost in mid river. Sampans are rowed from shore to ship with one or two passengers and their baggage. The ships purser can collect fares one at a time instead of being rushed by crowds. After an hour we slowly move up the river. We float by some meadows cut out of the jungle but soon see nothing but dense forest with large "Sal" and "Teak" trees behind the



sandy shores. Brush and climbing growth fill the space between the trees. To walk through this jungle one has to cut a path every foot of the way. Flat sand banks in the water are home to long legged birds. Monkeys live in trees and swing from branch to branch. Bamboo huts on tall wooden piles are spread far apart along the banks, always with a floating boat landing and a few palm trees. The river is their only road. When a rowboat approaches the moving ship, the crews throw out a bag or bundle for them to catch. This is their mail or freight delivery. We are now in the "Chittagong Hill Tracts", a tribal area populated by "chakma" (hill men), short and stocky people, with Mongolian features, living off the land for centuries but now mostly cutting and rafting bamboo for the paper mill.

Letter from the Jungle - Chandraghona, April 1956



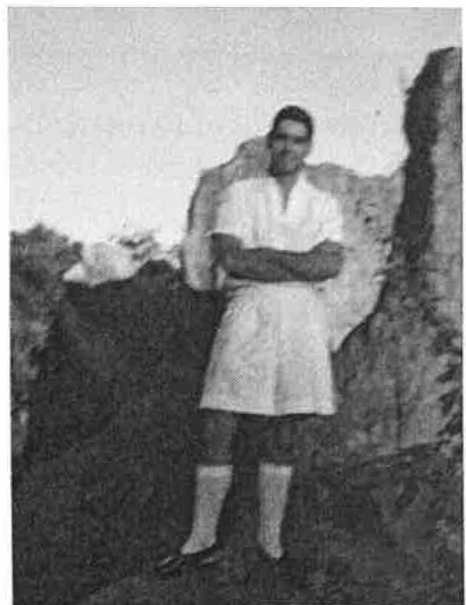
Chandraghona's modern concrete boat landing is on the north bank. Most buildings of the

paper mill are hidden by the jungle, but the digesters can be smelled. We land and most



passengers leave with me. The mill has a new company town, a club with dining room, guest house for bachelors and bungalows for married staff and management. At present a Swiss engineer, Mr. Meier, is general manager. Coordinate point is 92 degrees 20 minutes East / 22 degrees 45 minutes North. I am introduced and move into a room in the modern guest house high above the river facing west. As the sun sets, most foreign and some Pakistani employees come to the club's dining room. I know the routine: "no brown after six". So it is white shirt and shorts, white socks and

sandals. Men smoke pipe, cigars or cigarettes and wait for sunset. The male to female ratio must be ten to one, but there are some nice ladies here, all of them married. Lawn chairs are being reserved in anticipation of sunset while fried banana chips are munched and world affairs or events of the day are discussed in quiet conversation. Now the river is in deep shadow and the green hills turn yellow, orange and red. I can never get enough of beautiful, spectacular sunsets, but tonight I long for dusk because I am thirsty and do not want to waste my thirst entirely on water. The eastern sky is still red but the sun has set and we sit on the lawn chairs with drinks in hand. Noise levels of conversation gradually rise after a few drinks and discussions grow livelier. Then, as twilight fades to darkness, the crowd thins and old timers tell tales of the "good old days" when India was a colony with a nostalgia reminding me of ex-Colonel Foster in Ireland. It must have been a great life for those with the right skin color, rank or position. Most leave to go home or eat in the dining room. It is dark night now under the stars. I am the last to leave while the servants



fold up the lawn chairs.



A set of stereo aerial photos help me see the jungle through stereo goggles in three dimensions. Bamboo patches are enclaves within the jungle. The bamboo is cut, bundled and dragged to the river. There it is tied into rafts and floated down the river to the mill. Large patches of prime bamboo are too far from the river to be dragged. That is where our portable light weight ropeways come in. Able to reach a mile and a half into the hinterland, across gullies and over hills, we must harvest remote patches not reached

by dragging. The mill is just making newsprint for now, but higher quality paper may be produced in the future.



Twelve men, including translator, cook and boat men accompany me to the first site two day's boat ride up from Chandraghona. We pass Kaptai on the way, a dam and power plant built with US aid by Utah Construction Company. Swissboring almost sent me here to work two years ago. I meet the man, an Italian, who was sent here instead of me and find him less than happy. My appendix operation was indeed a blessing in disguise. Two days later we arrive at the clearing where my friend Schneider has already unloaded and sorted out our shipment. An unloading station is installed at the river bank, above the high water mark. Two separate lines are hacked out of the jungle to the nearest natural bamboo patches. We show the "chakma" workers how to hang the roller supports high up on tree trunks and thread the

rope over it. As soon as the winch is ready we have an experimental section running to show the workers how it is supposed to work. These are very practical men who see and learn quickly. Manual labor is cheap and plentiful. When the first bundle arrives and slides down into the river they applaud! We celebrate with tea, bananas, cucumbers and coconuts. From then on they work with very little instruction, correcting their own mistakes without being told how to do it.



Company is in Financial Trouble

Anytime an employer runs out of money it is a big worry for its workers. Eight thousand miles away from home makes it worse. We had as many as twenty inquiries and quotes going at the same time, about half in Pakistan'



s mountain provinces and half in India, Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Nepal. The market was ready for many of our products and our competition from the Peoples Republic of Czechoslovakia made good use of it, generously financed by the communist bloc. "Willcox Buckwell India" was the Caterpillar dealer for northern India and, among many other imported heavy equipment lines, represented Kabel Lasso AG. Their Mr. Malhotra, a sales manager, accompanied me on most trips. I was regularly given advances for travel expenses by them, but my salary was slow in being transferred to my account at home. Worse, Schneider's family in Switzerland was not paid at all for two months.



Telegraphs were the only fast way of complaining at the head office in Switzerland and getting excuses back. One excuse was that they had lost Schneider's address! Before the work was complete in Chandraghona, Schneider took ill and was sent home by doctor's orders. I finished the first installation and left for New Delhi, India where projects in Kashmir, and Nepal required several weeklong trips. One of those trips was to the "Kosi" hydroelectric project in Nepal.

Letter from Nepal - August 1956

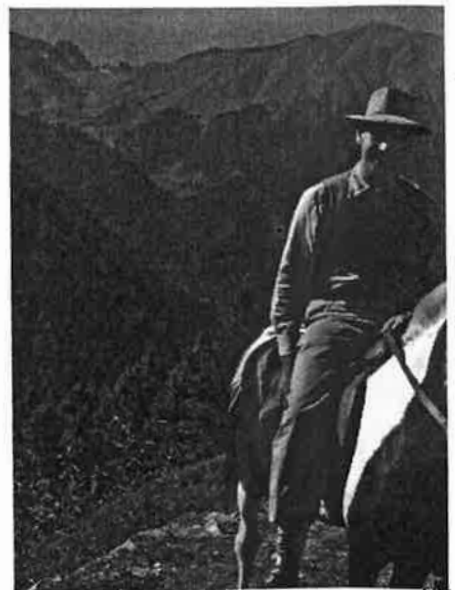
India's Ganges River Valley needs flood control, irrigation water and hydroelectric power for development, but the mountains on its northern border are in Nepal. A bilateral contract allows India to build and manage a system of dams, tunnels and canals for this purpose on Nepalese territory. I take the train to Patna, the railroad station on the south bank of the Ganges River. Across the river is farmland where floods and droughts take devastating turns of destruction every few years. It has been this way for all of history and the local people bear this burden stoically as "acts of God" (or gods?). I stay in a government rest house and have long

conversations with bureaucrats and engineers. Some wonder aloud if the gods may take revenge for this interference by us humans. I cross the river by ferry and travel by taxi for a day toward the hills. In Biratnagar I report to the purchasing agent in a modern, large administrative building

with a beautiful view. The place is full of busy executives and several hundred employees, all paid by foreign aid. Driving by jeep into the Kosi Valley we reach Dharan, just sixty miles south of Mount Everest. Here the Kosi River turns west and the Tamur joins it from the north. Both have a dam planned a few miles from town. I know this is Nepal but could not tell by just looking at it.

Foothills backed by a high mountain range look about the

same everywhere in this latitude. Plowed fields near the river, then smaller farms the higher I go, pastures, orchards and terraced garden plots, rock walls around the steepest pastures and villages of stone houses with slate roofs. The people look different, stocky, with Mongolian faces and many are Buddhists, some wear Buddhist monk robes. Most homes have prayer flags and I see carved wooden demon masks. It all reminds me of Baltistan, but also of the upper Rhone valley in Switzerland.





Of the project itself, there are only a few exploratory drill sites and access trails but not much else, no work crews, no heavy equipment yet. We ride on horseback to the borrow areas and my compass and inclinometer come in handy to help locate the position of "planned" facilities on old military maps. At night I sleep in rustic inns and eat at local eateries. This region is mostly Hindu and food is completely vegetarian. Even eating eggs is prohibited to high caste Hindus. I have cases of American combat ration cans

and am not really bothered by the lack of meat in my diet. After ten days I ride by taxi and ferry back to Patna and from there to New Delhi and city life. The contrast is mind boggling; honking cars and traffic jams late into the night, social life at the Cecil hotel, swimming pools, blaring radios, working telephones and any kind of food or drink available until midnight.

Jaranwala's Desert is now Plowed and Watered - October 1956

I am on a trip to Makerwal, West Pakistan, where our Coal Ropeway proposal is making it through the purchasing process. A detour I take, purely for curiosity, takes me to Jaranwala where we drilled wells for Swissboring last year. The town still looks the same, but on the high ground away from the canals everything has changed. Where we had just ruts through the desert going from well to well, there are gravel roads now, between fields of eight feet tall corn. The mud house we used as a kitchen has been enlarged, has electricity and three families live in it. As I leave the area, I notice one government drill rig still sitting over an unfinished well site, but no workers are in sight. On closer inspection it turns out that the rig is derelict, all parts of value have been removed, possibly stolen. This is the only quarter section of dry desert soil left unplowed in the region.

Off to Japan - November 1956

After covering a lot of ground during summer and fall in India's Srinagar, Simla, Nainital, Dalhousie, and also in Pakistan's Murree, my duties for Kabel Lasso AG came to an end. I was anxious to have my long awaited vacation in Japan. I asked for and received a US tourist visa issued by the US consulate in Lahore on October 26th 1956, just in case I would prefer to return from Japan to Switzerland "the other way" via USA. Air travel allowed layovers at just about any stop on the way to a destination, and I had enough cash to spend on such a luxury. I spent several days as a tourist in Rangoon, Bangkok and Hong Kong before the final flight to Tokyo. A former guest house for visitors to the Imperial Court was recently converted to the "Teito" hotel, with all the modern comforts of Europe but an unmistakably Japanese ambiance.

The "Ginza" shopping and entertainment district was a short cab ride away. I bought a needed rain coat, winter clothes and shoes and went to restaurants and clubs. Japan was still under American occupation and I made friends with some officers my age on leave. I recall in particular one group of artillery officers who wished they were instead into rocketry because that was, in their opinion, the weapon of the future. We drank, sang American songs, listened to country music and had a good time. We also took bus tours into the countryside and to Kyoto and other tourist places. One evening a message telegram from Kabel Lasso AG awaited me at the hotel desk: call

number X at once! I wondered what good this would do because it was past office hours, but called anyway. "Australian Consulate" answered. Had I misdialed? No, are you Mr. Rümmele? Yes I am. Can you be here tomorrow morning at 9 AM with all your baggage? Yes, but please tell me why? "Your company is sending you to the Snowy Mountains Project above Canberra and your flight leaves tomorrow about noon!"

Australia, the Suez Crisis and Home Again - December 1956

There was a problem with my Swiss passport. It had not expired but it was so full of rubber stamps that no page was left for the Australian visa. The consular official called the Swiss Consulate who issued me a new passport by courier in less than an hour followed by the Australian visa both dated the same December 10th 1956 and I left on the noon flight. I was on the "road" again, this time by way of Manila to Sydney. A Forestry and Timber Bureau employee met me at the airport and we drove to Canberra together. On the trip I found out what my assignment was: to see the "catchment area" (wooded watershed) of the lower reservoirs of the Snowy Mountains Project and make a proposal for road-less timber extraction. Because my stay was only two weeks, I wrote no reports and remember few things. Sydney was a big, noisy port city with beautiful beaches and Canberra much smaller, neat, pleasant and located in the foothills of the coastal range.

Hiking through the gently sloping catchment area was easy. Young pine trees were well spaced, most areas recently planted, very little underbrush. Two employees of the Timber Bureau accompanied me and I learned about their expectations of our ropeway system. They had been misled by correspondence from our main office. I had doubts about the whole idea of road-less timber extraction under these circumstances. First, how would they fight fires without roads? And second, only a fully mechanized operation makes sense when labor is scarce and expensive. So, why was I sent here? Because an over-zealous salesman in Switzerland had the illusion that our extremely labor-intensive timber extraction system could be used anywhere. A ten year old film of timber harvesting in France, showing German prisoners of war loading four foot long log splits one by one manually on an early prototype of our ropeway was sent to the Timber Bureau. It was embarrassing to watch that film with them. We laid out a few possible routes on paper and a quote was sent but I can not imagine that it ever led to a sale. It was a great vacation for me but I left even more disillusioned with my company.

In the summer heat of the southern hemisphere I enjoyed Sydney's beaches while waiting for my scheduled flight back to Zurich. While eating lunch with several other young people at a Swiss restaurant near the beach, I heard a news bulletin on the radio: "British and French military forces have landed in Egypt and occupied the Suez Canal Zone; all flights through the Middle East and Africa are cancelled". I telegraphed the main office in Basle and was ordered to wait for their further instructions or until the crisis was over. Instead of waiting I paid a fifty dollars surcharge and changed my ticket to return over the Pacific, the USA and the "Polar Route" then popular with airlines.

The flight seemed endless. Sydney, New Caledonia, Canton island, Hawaii at 250 miles per hour with six piston engines driving the propellers! I spent the Christmas week in Honolulu, and met my sister Valerie briefly in Los Angeles at the airport. From there the plane headed north to Canada for refueling and proceeded further north-northeast. Although it was night, we could see ice and snow in the moonlight. Finally southbound over Scotland and England we landed in

London. In my white shorts, Hawaiian shirt and sandals I felt not only cold but foolish. No time to change, Zurich is the next stop. With the Japanese raincoat from my suitcase I made it by train to Basle and by streetcar to Allschwil. My mother almost fainted as I arrived unannounced. Dad only smiled at my funny clothes. "Be it ever so humble – there's no place like home". I was glad to be home, went back to my bed in the attic and slept a long time.

A call to the company office signaled change. Kabel Lasso AG had been bought by the "Swiss Metallurgical Corporation" that also owned other manufacturers, among them "Pavert AG". The financial crisis was over. I was assured I would receive my overdue expenses and back pay as soon as I could get to the office. To move those payments into the next tax year I waited a few days for 1957. I also found out that one of the projects I had bid in Pakistan, the Makerwal Coalmine Ropeway was awarded to us and an advance payment already arrived at the bank. The new management wanted to know if I was willing to continue working for the company? Well, maybe, let's talk after New Years Day.

New Year's Party 1957

Tomorrow is New Years Eve and I do not intend to sit at home for the occasion. My first visit is to my friend Walter. Where and with whom shall we celebrate the New Year? He tells me the group plans to go to a New Years dance like last year, but Romana can not come because her sister Yvonne is here from Milan, so she has to stay home with her, of course. "No way!" I say and go over to the Wega Strasse where the Schäfer sisters live with parents and grandmother. "Nonna" only speaks Italian and I speak to her in my fluent but imperfect Italian learned in Pakistan. Romana confirms Walter's story, but I offer another solution, "Why not take Yvonne along to the New Years Eve dance?" And that's what we do.

Part Four

Married, Working in the "Third World"

"Trio Bellinzonese", the Schäfer Sisters

Since my Boy Scout years I had known the "Trio Bellinzonese", with father Oscar Schäfer playing the accordion and sisters Yvonne, Romana and Silvana singing songs of the southernmost Swiss canton "Ticino" in Italian, wearing colorful local costumes. Italian-Swiss are Swiss who speak Italian, just like French-Canadians are Canadians who speak French. The trio was always popular on stage at community events because of their pleasant, lively tunes and three-voice harmonies. Of course we could not understand what they sang, and to the casual viewer the three girls looked alike.

Since last year's Mardi Gras party I knew who among the three girls was Romana, and now I see her with different eyes, or in a different light. For the New Year's Eve ball, the big band "Basler Musikverein" with over fifty musicians plays all the latest swing tunes and we take turns dancing with everyone in the party. As midnight approaches I time it deliberately to have the dance into the New Year with Romana. I know it is the custom to turn off the light at the stroke of twelve, but apparently she does not know it. So, for the first few seconds of 1957 we kiss and I feel we are going to be a couple. To find out how she felt, you have to ask her.

The following weeks we dated, dined at fine restaurants and watched a few movies. One morning my mother asked me at breakfast, "Were you out with the Schäfer girl again last night?" Yes I was. "Be careful, she is so young and may think you are serious". Of course I knew that and told her that I was serious. She said, "Well then go ahead" because she liked her and her family. On one of the dates in early January I asked Romana how old she was. She said "nineteen". An hour later I found out that her birthday was February 10th. "So, then you will be twenty next month?" "No, then I will turn nineteen!"

I think I remember asking her to marry me, but she says I only talked about work in Pakistan and India, where orchids always bloom and monkeys play in the trees, and asked if she would come with me. Back then, this meant marriage to both of us. Nobody in his or her right mind would travel that far together without being married first. She was in her third year of a four year apprenticeship at "Stritt Lederwaren Fabrik" (fine leather goods factory) and hated to leave without finishing it. When she told her mother and grandmother about my intentions she still had doubts, but grandmother encouraged her and mother was not opposed to it. Was I acceptable because I spoke Italian? News traveled to her older sister Yvonne in Milan. She called back with a stern warning, "Don't do anything until I can talk sense to you, I will be in Basle next weekend!" I never knew how this talk turned out. On her birthday we rode my coach pulled by a single horse to the "Bottminger Schloss" (Bottminger castle), a fancy restaurant in a renovated old castle, complete with drawbridge and moat for our engagement. Both families awaited us there. Then wedding plans were made for the last week of April.



New Contract with the Swiss Metallurgical Corporation

It was now clear that Romana would be my wife and come with me to Pakistan and Afghanistan when I had to go. So, I signed a contract with Swiss Metallurgical Corporation and started work for them at once on various projects in Switzerland and on export offers. I also bought a used Chevrolet Sedan, four years old and with over 100,000 kilometers on the odometer. To try it out, we drove with my parents to northern Italy to visit our distant relatives in Valenza. The car was quite a change from the Volkswagen Beetle; soft springs, wide, soft bench seats and a V8 quietly purring at "Autostrada" speeds. We had no freeways yet in Switzerland, but Italy had toll roads where tiny, high-revved Alfa's and Lancia's doing twice our speed passed us "slow pokes".

Because I had to take a lot of survey instruments and special tools with me, I proposed to the company that I would drive my car to Pakistan and Afghanistan. They were surprised but did not know much about the Middle East or Southeast Asia and accepted. It saved them buying a car for me and gas was cheaper than airfares.

Three Weeks in Tito's Yugoslavia

On March 26th 1957 I travel to Sarajewo, Yugoslavia to meet with managers and engineers of the state owned Forest Industries Organization "Zicznica" about timber extraction ropeways (by Lasso) and sawdust briquette presses (by Pavert), while Romana prepares for our wedding next month. Crossing the "Iron Curtain" into Yugoslavia at Trieste is an experience. I have a letter of recommendation from their consulate in Zurich and am treated like an official visitor on government business. The border guards salute and bring an officer out of the customs building to

welcome me. I am invited to tea with him while the guards search the car bumper to bumper and check the underside with a rolling mirror.

It is a drab country with strict rationing of food and other consumer items. The only colorful things are the Tito portraits on every wall and most doors. Gas is only available in cities where pumps are attended from 9 AM to 5 PM by uniformed policemen. I receive a list of all pumps on my route and am admonished not to stray from the direct route to Sarajevo. All my baggage is on the back seat leaving the trunk for several filled gas cans. From Zagreb to Belgrade is a four lane high speed concrete paved "Autoput" (sort of freeway) with gravel shoulders. Except for trucks and Russian "Volga" cars there is very little traffic. Leaving the high-speed "autoput" before reaching Belgrade I take the road south through small towns and narrow valleys with green meadows and blooming fruit trees. Hills are wooded, changing from low growth and bare branches to tall pines the further south I drive. Sarajevo is a large industrial city with historic castles and a fortress. The predominant industry is timber and pulp, with most logs traveling to the mill by rail. An elaborate, new but ill kept administrative complex south of town is a beehive of activity, even after working hours, and the place where I have to report. A night guard at the reception desk directs me to a shabby government boarding house where I have tea, some food and sleep.

Next morning at nine I go back to the office reception desk. This time my letter does wonders. I am ushered into a conference room with fine furniture, upholstered chairs, well lit and swept clean, with telephone, radio, recording machine and framed maps of all the forests in the region. Three people meet me, speaking French. The top ranking man says he is sorry I was directed to the boarding house and has my baggage moved to the hotel. I am told that one of them, Franz, will be with me the entire time of my stay. He is probably a policeman out of uniform, from Slovenia, has a German last name and speaks fluent German with an Austrian accent, but when other people are around we speak French. My work takes me to many project sites and it is essential to have Franz translate and get me through the many checkpoints. The entire forest economy, from logging to sawmill or pulp and paper is very labor intensive. There are workers in large groups everywhere. We have good machinery to offer, but require hard currency. It is a pleasant work environment with all ranks of this communist society. Rank is not visible at first, but the manner how people interact makes me recognize, even without understanding the language, who is up or down a few rungs on the social or political ladder. Is this the "classless" society some European intellectuals imagine? Dream on you dreamers!

After about two weeks my work is completed and I am in a hurry, because I have to be home for the wedding in less than a week. My car's trunk is full of gas cans ready to go. I could leave before nightfall and make it to Zagreb by midnight, but the head of the Forest Industries is giving a party in the hotel's red-flag draped ballroom and I absolutely, positively have to attend. It is for some anniversary occasion, celebrating the blowing up of a bridge a decade ago, very serious stuff. Both other foreigners in the hotel are also invited. One of them is a Russian and the other a Frenchman, a political "fellow traveler" ("useful idiots" as Stalin called them) writing for leftist newspapers in Western Europe. I wear jacket, tie and my last clean, white shirt. Franz and other rank and file are not invited. This is only for the "Nomenklatura" (listed communist elite) and their wives. Some gentlemen wear uniforms with ribbons and orders tingling as they walk. Commissars display the red-star badge prominently on their tailored suits. A large band plays marches. Standing toasts are numerous, lengthy and must be emotional but I can not understand a word of it. Then the "Internationale" (communist anthem) is intoned, everybody sings along in

their own language. I stand next to the Frenchman and, knowing the words, sing along in German while he sings loudly in French. When we finish he gives me the fist-salute and embraces me! He must think we are "comrades" in the cause. Fooled him!

Place cards indicate the order of seating and I soon understand why: the foreigners are seated at tables surrounded by people who speak their language. To my surprise, those around me do not mind speaking German. Word gets around that I am rushing home to get married. The lady of highest rank at our table asks me in a loud voice so everyone can hear it. I confirm it of course. Then she asks, "What is your bride studying?" I reply truthfully, "Leathercraft, she works in a factory". The irony of the classless society is recognized by most. It takes an awkward minute to get small talk flowing again. The meal is excellent and plentiful, as are the drinks. I leave when it is not impolite to go, soon after the first drunk commissar is hustled out of the ballroom by his wife.

After five hours of sleep I hit the road with a thermos of hot coffee and something to eat. I am 100 miles closer to home by the time the sun rises and in Italy before sunset, reaching the Swiss border about midnight. Home again two days before the civil ceremony, I join the church choir for evening practice. Romana is not present but sick at home. After practice we all go to her house and sing some love songs outside her window. I do not know if she heard us. Friday we marry in city hall with our friends as witnesses, but the real wedding will be in church on Easter Monday.

The Wedding Party

Before my trip to Yugoslavia we made reservations for the wedding party at “Schloss Binningen”, a restored mansion restaurant with a large park near Basle. Invitations, menu and wine choices were probably made by Romana or the mothers because I do not remember any of it. Our coachman from Schoenenbuch agreed to have my carriage pulled by his two horses. My aunt Mimy who was ladies fashion manager at “Feldpausch” (a ladies clothing store) helped Romana with the choice of wedding dress. I already had my Tuxedo with both a black and a white jacket. Having bridesmaids and best men was not a custom, just two witnesses: Ruedi Sütterlin, my friend and Yvonne Schäfer, her sister.



The big day is here, Easter Monday the 22nd of April 1957. Fortunately Romana has overcome her illness, or had she just been nervous, having the "jitters"? The coach arrives at my home on the Lerchenweg. Ruedi and I sit down and ride two

blocks to the Wegastrasse where Romana and Yvonne join us for the trip to St. Theresa Catholic Church. After we say our "I do's" there is a crowd outside church, because it is a holiday. The four of us ride the coach from Allschwil to Schloss Binningen and the party can get started.

We have about fifty invited friends and relatives. The food is good and so is the "Chateau Neuf du Pape" wine. There are some toasts with raised glasses. My friend Niggi Müller must have heard about some strange custom in "who knows where": after a special toast, drink your glass empty and then smash it! So, true to that custom, after somebody's toast he guzzles his full crystal wine glass empty and throws it into the fireplace where it breaks. I watch all other guests with alarm, thinking of the bill if everybody would follow his example. Nobody does, thank God.



Father Schäfer's combo plays dance music and probably a few sing-alongs. Then we go down to the beautiful park for fresh air and photos. Romana receives a self defense gas pistol and coupons for ten riding lessons. We asked for no other presents because we will be leaving in a few months and do not want to accumulate stuff. The Müller family offered us their cabin to use for our honeymoon week, and that is where we drive after the party. It is peaceful and quiet up there in the hills, so quiet that three days later we drive to Basle to go dining and dancing, then back to the cabin.

Four Months of Married Life in Basle

I am back to work the next Monday and we live in a small one-bedroom furnished apartment on the Allschwilerplatz in Basle. On my business trips I can now take Romana along without chaperones! We travel to Lichtenstein and throughout Switzerland. The visa for Afghanistan can only be obtained in Paris and the visa for Iran only in London. Instead of spending another night in London, we take the train to Brighton and spend a few days at that channel resort city where Londoners flee to during the hot summer weeks. These trips are pure vacations and we enjoy them. Romana learns to cook, hard to believe but true. At home she always helped in the kitchen but was not in charge. Now it is her "duty" and our two mothers help with advice, but only when asked. Knowing that our stay in the city will not last long, we see as many movies and other entertainment as possible. The car is packed, papers are in order and it is time to leave. This is by now routine for me, but new for her. As before, I write "reports" to the company and to family and friends that now help me remember dates and routes.

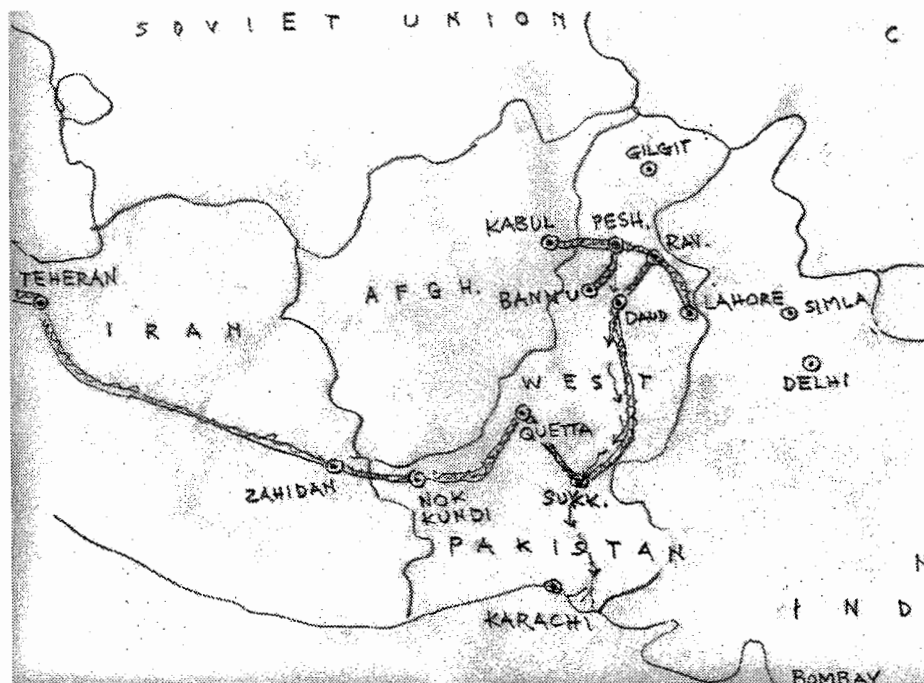
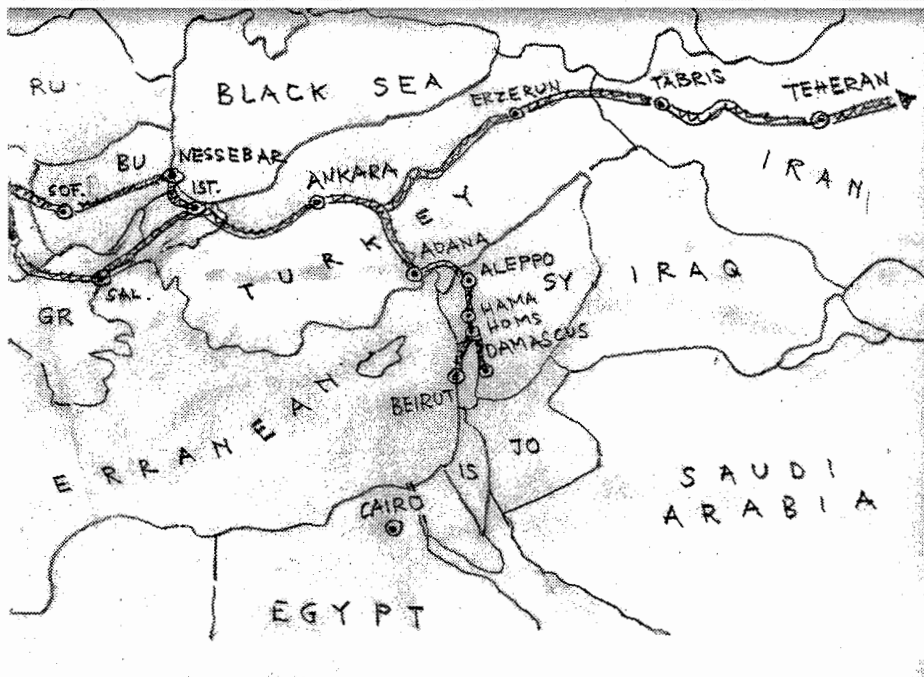
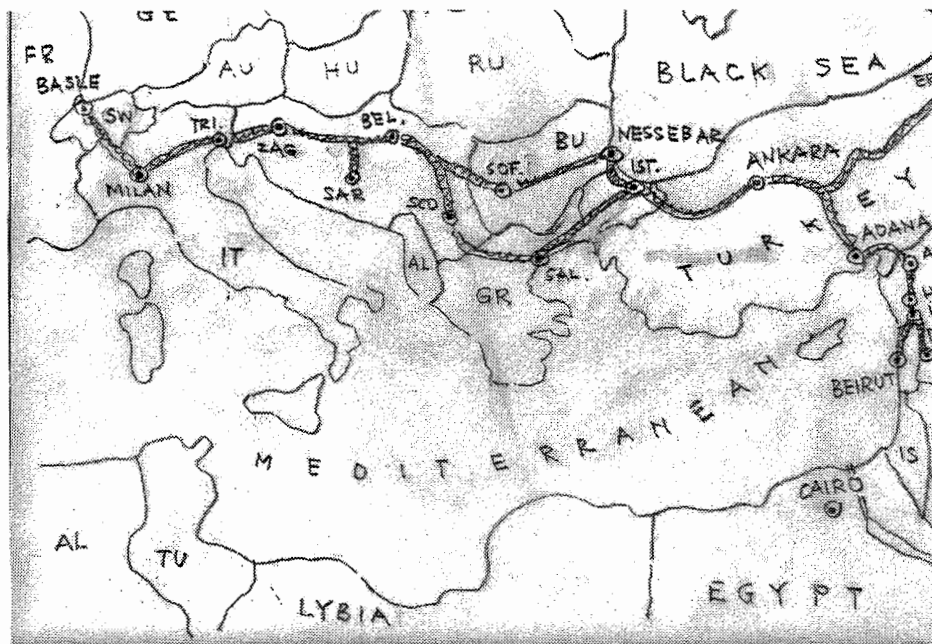
To Afghanistan, Pakistan and India

Trip to Afghanistan by Car

The odometer of our Chevrolet reads 136,201 kilometers (= "milepost zero") as we leave on the 12th of September 1957. We stay overnight in Hospental. Next day we stop in Lugano to visit relatives and pick up a compass / inclinometer specially ordered with 400 centigrade circle to conform to the theodolite and the function books. Italian customs initially want a deposit of 25% of the value of all instruments but relent and just make a note in my passport. Night of the 14th in Lubliana (= MP. 760) in the state owned, new, dirty, high rise hotel. The bathtub on the 16th floor is full of large cockroaches; the wooden balcony creaks as we try to set foot on it. To use the elevator, we must phone the reception desk. A secret police agent acting as "bellboy" has the only key to all elevator doors, picks us up and brings us back. Romana does not feel well, culture shock?

I know the roads past Zagreb and halfway to Belgrade. Beyond it is new to me. We make it to Belgrade before 5 PM just in time to fill up on gas and fill the cans in the trunk. On progressively worse roads we drive as far as Razani in Yugoslav Macedonia where we sleep in the car along the road. Close to the Greek border I fail to dodge a large bump in the dirt road and the oil pan is damaged. I fix it with a hammer and drive on to the border and then to Saloniki (MP. 1,480) where a trade fair is in full swing and all hotels are fully occupied. The visitor's bureau finds a family willing to rent us a room late at night. We get the oil pan fixed and continue via Xhanti to the Turkish border. Formalities take about two hours, and then it's on to Babaeski for a night in a fairly nice hotel. In Istanbul (MP. 1,980) I have an appointment with Mr. Hikmet Tibet, a gentleman who may be a contact for further business. We take a day of rest, see the famous "blue mosque" and have the car serviced. The Swiss consul advises us to drive through Ankara and Erzerun rather than the shorter route through Syria. We follow his advice.

Leaving on the 21st by ferry across the Bosphorus, we drive on good roads to Ankara the same evening. From there the road east is progressively worse, allowing only 35 miles per hour average speed. Through Corum and Susehri we reach Erzerun on the 24th. We meet four Australians who will drive the same route as we, and agree to convoy for mutual assistance and protection. To leave Turkey we must show receipts of money exchanged in the country at official rates. Dozens of dust covered cars are in a field along the road. Their owners were "clever" and exchanged money at much better rates on the black market but their cars were impounded as a penalty. Customs at the Iranian border takes three hours. The next night we spend in a "caravanserai" (walled compound with open stalls facing the courtyard) on our own folding cots. Dirt roads are deep washboard with occasional rain caused ruts two feet deep. We travel in a convoy of five cars, spaced far enough to let the dust settle but short enough to still see each other. Our car has a flat tire and as I change it, I see that one rear spring leaf is broken. Limping in first gear into Mianeh, we find a blacksmith who makes us a spring replacement on the spot. The Australians stay with us the whole time and help when needed.





PERSIEN



On the 29th we reach Teheran (MP. 4,050). Suddenly, the dirt road changes into a modern four lane highway with planted median and excellent concrete pavement. Why? Because this is the 20 mile stretch from the international airport to the city where all journalists see it as proof that Iran has a modern road network. We stay in the Hotel Ambassador in a very expensive 15 Dollars per night room. It is hotel life at its best. In the morning, the room servant brings Romana a tray with Yasmin flowers. Food is excellent. The car is serviced but I still need a new spring leaf. None are available at the Chevrolet dealer's parts counter but he directs me to a shop nearby, in the black market, where I will find original USA made parts. What I find there is a neatly packed spring with printed label "Cheverlet USA". I tell the vendor that the name is misspelled and show him the "O" on the car's badge. He replies, "So, can a big factory not make a small mistake?" I buy it anyway and have it installed. I also consult with the Afghan consul and am told to avoid the direct route via Kandahar. Instead we will go through Pakistan, the longer but safer way.

Early in the morning of the 4th of October our convoy hits the road again. After a few miles the pavement ends and the dirt road begins, with potholes and washboard as before. We drive through Damghan, Nishanpur, Quain to Zahedan (MP. 5,310) where we clear exit formalities from Iran on the 7th, losing half a day, and then continue to the border with Pakistan. At once we are on paved roads, left hand traffic, and in a more civilized country where highway police keep would be robbers under control and where I speak the language and feel "at home"! The entry customs post is 140 miles from the border at Nok Kundi and its clean government rest house is a welcome improvement over the previous overnight accommodations for all of us.

Next morning after three hours on paved roads we reach Quetta, the capital of Baluchistan (MP. 5,810). Heading southeast, late, in a dark, moonless night over Bolan Pass we suddenly see bright daylight all around us. I hit the brakes not knowing what this could be but in a few seconds it is dark again. We later learn that it probably was a Russian rocket booster burning up in the atmosphere. After crossing the Indus River over the dam at Sukkur we bid "farewell" to our Australian friends. We were able to help each other several times since we met in eastern Turkey and now they drive south while we proceed north to Mianwali, Maiindus and Daudkhel, where I worked two years ago. The surroundings and the people are familiar to me. I leave most of the valuable survey instruments with friends, briefly visit the Makerwal Coal Mines and drive the next day October 12th on to Rawalpindi (MP. 6,760) where we stay at the Flashman's Hotel.

The "Grand Trunk Road" leads from Calcutta all the way to the base of the Khyber Pass west of Peshawar. What a relief it is to drive at 65 miles per hour for a change. Not a foot inside Afghanistan begin some of the worst road conditions seen so far. If the Khyber Pass has a bad reputation, the following "Latterband" Pass is worse, a lot worse! A German company is building a dam and power plant in Sarobi, and we are the guests of a Mr. Eberlein of Siemens Bauunion. Next morning we find that a creek has washed out the road to Kabul and we must return to Sarobi to await repairs. Finally on the 18th of October we arrive in the fertile, high plain of Kabul (MP. 7,110) and check into the Kabul Hotel, a government owned facility for foreigners. This hotel's construction was started 16 years ago but is not yet completed. A little foretaste of what is to come?

Installing a Coal Briquette Plant in Kabul - November 1957

Why am I here? Pavert AG has a contract to furnish and install a coal briquetting plant. Friable, soft coal-dust from a mine up north is compressed with animal dung and molasses into hard, uniform briquettes about the size of an ice hockey puck. The product will be sold by count, not by weight, to use for cooking and heating. The customer is the Royal Ministry of Mines and Industry using its own funds and my contact is the minister himself. The original intent was to locate the plant in Pol-e-Khomri near the Russian border, but the location was recently transferred to two miles south of Kabul. If successful, similar plants are planned for the Herat and Kandahar regions. Our shipment arrived several weeks ago. The ten cases, some weighing over 5 tons, were delivered and apparently just pushed off the truck, letting them fall to the ground and break. Damage and pilfering is visible before I even check the inventory. Most bolts, nuts and tools are missing. When I obtained the visa in Paris three months ago, the consul showed me a message from Kabul stating the site was fenced, guarded and electric power installed. None of it was true.

In the center of Kabul is a walled fortress, surrounded by old buildings. A dozen modern four story buildings are at the edge of the old town. Snow covered mountains dwarf the city. The bazaar is colorful, but it is not advisable for women to walk there without full "burka" veil. We find out the hard way when a man spits at Romana for not wearing a veil. I am glad a German family lets us rent a room in their home. Our social life is mostly at homes of western foreigners. Numerous eastern foreigners, Russians and satellite nations are in town, but we seldom have contact with them. It is so cold at night that we lay a carpet on top of the bed covers. Common heating method is one unreliable, portable kerosene heater in each room.

Installation of the plant with modern cranes and other equipment could be done in a week, but here it takes four times as long. Purchase orders for supplies, gas or tools are signed by the minister personally. Once presses, cyclone and conveyor belts are installed I leave without testing the plant, because there is still no electric power within a mile of the site. The passes to Peshawar are snow covered and not plowed. Back in Pakistan we feel secure and relieved.

Travel and Big City Parties - December 1957

After a short but luxurious stay in Lahore's Faletti hotel, we fly to Chittagong. My social life is now different because I am married. We visit with old friends of mine at the Chittagong Planter's Club and I find that, with a wife, we can meet modern Pakistani women as well as their husbands. A year ago as a bachelor, I was never invited to dances, dinners, concerts and parties of mixed company. Our stay in the jungle towns of Chandraghona and Kaptai is short, but it gives Romana a taste of this part of the world. Soon we are on an airplane again traveling to Karachi for meetings and a



Christmas party with the Willcox family, and then back to Lahore for a New Year's party with old Swissboring friends, the Serra family. The Chevrolet is serviced and we depart in mid January 1958 for the Makerwal Coalmine. My tuxedo and her cocktail dress are packed away and will not be needed for awhile!

Makerwal Coalmines - Spring, Summer 1958

A mountain range twenty miles west of the Indus River contains coal outcrops high above the valley floor that have been mined using primitive hand tools for over a century. In the near future, Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation (PIDC) will need a train load of coal each



day in its Daud Khel plant. Modern, efficient methods are required and our aerial ropeway is just a small part of it. Coal-seams dip about 15 degrees westward. A mile long, level, central tunnel is driven to intersect the seams for future long wall excavation. At the same time, outcrop operations are modernized with decline tunnels feeding production to our ropeway. I had laid out a center line profile last year, then an order was placed, the equipment manufactured and shipped, and now we have to install it. Foundation work takes several weeks. As the machinery arrives, Mr. Roseano, a mechanic from Italy also arrives and the installation begins.

Two German families, the Bettners and the Koehlers are employed as supervisors of the mine and live in the mine settlement. Total employment was only 100 men last year but has now increased to 400 men, some now in training for the mechanized operations to come. We live in a recently completed flat roofed brick bungalow. Our servants are: a cook, a bearer and a sweeper. Home office staff in Switzerland will never understand why we need servants at all, but these are the customs of the country. Cooking is done over an open bed of burning coal. We have running cool water and a barrel on the roof lets water get warmer as summer approaches. All floors are concrete slabs on grade. Electricity is turned on only part of the time, usually at night. Ceiling fans keep the air in two rooms circulating. It is spring, the best time of the year in the upper Indus valley. We visit with friends in Daud Khel and Mari Indus some weekends. But now it is getting hotter. Summer heat starts early in the year and the afternoon temperatures are regularly over 100 degrees Fahrenheit but reach 113 degrees in summer. I take the narrow gauge mine rails part way up the hill, but then must hike the rest of the way uphill on switchback trails where long donkey strings carry coal in jute bags down to the tracks. We start the daily trip before daylight and usually quit work at 3 PM, soaking wet. Romana is not yet used to the heat and suffers just sitting in the shade. Once a day she walks the 300 yards through the dust to the Bettner's house for a chat with Mrs. Bettner and her two daughters, and for a cup of Nescafe. Food is adequate, whatever vegetable is in season is the only thing for a few weeks, then the next vegetable takes over. Without refrigeration the choice is very limited.



1958

MAKERWAL (WESTPAKISTAN)



The "Hill Stations" - June 1958

Along the foothills of the Himalaya Mountains, in the cool mountain air, are several old colonial resort towns called "Hill Stations" where British families spent the summer months away from the heat of the plains. Rudyard Kipling wrote stories about those towns in the late 1800's. Most famous are Srinagar, Simla and Dehra Dun, but smaller places are even more charming, like Murree, Dalhousie and Nainital. As luck would have it, I have to travel to Murree on business in June. Away from the sweltering Punjab plains we drive to this hill station north of Rawalpindi by car. Founded in 1850 it is located high above the Jehlum river valley on a steep hillside, where pine forests fill the ravines, flowers are blooming in green meadows



and snowmelt turns every creek into a raging torrent. Arosa in Switzerland comes to mind, or maybe the Arosa of a hundred years ago. To come here is like stepping back in time, complete with old hotels, quaint tea houses and a Victorian band stand in the middle of town square. The air smells of "Deodars" (local pine tree), so work and vacation is one and the same. The government dangles a tourist aerial tramway project like a carrot before the people's eyes, to please a local politician and gain popular support. I do what I have to do and enjoy every minute of it. But I can only drag it out so long, and then we must return to the coalmine. The twisting road takes us down into the Punjab valley, and with every curve the temperature rises a degree until we reach over 100 again. Crossing the Indus at Kalabagh, we leave the green fields for the rocky desert and see through the blue haze of cooking fires our "home away from home", the company housing of Makerwal Collieries.

If we remember anything bad about Makerwal, it is the 100 degree heat and not much letup at night. Before going to bed under our mosquito nets we pour water on the concrete floor to cool it a little. The fan is running if the power is not shut off. Still we wake up hot, and longingly look for the first monsoon clouds on the horizon. We must wait until almost August for the first rains, not a heavy downpour but enough to cool the desert and turn the dust to mud. The installation is going along at a good pace and Mr. Roseano the mechanic is in his glory, doing what he has done in Africa years ago: motivating a crew of unskilled workers to work faster than they are used to.

Another Trip to Quetta - September 1958



We take trips for the company and one of them is to Quetta's Fort Sandeman where I first visited four years ago. Mr. Himmen, a German coal expert and his wife accompany us on the day long trip on dirt roads through rough country. We arrive as daylight wanes and see the fort glowing in the last rays of the setting sun. Reporting to the military authorities, the commander remembers me. We are invited to stay in comfortable rooms in the

fort and asked to be ready for a formal dinner with the commander and all officers by 8 PM. This is an old garrison post and now a military college. The hallway is decorated with identical plaques of all the commanders of the fort going back over a century. The names are English, Scottish or Irish well into the 1900's, but then there are some Indian, Sikh and Muslim names, first alternating, then all of them.

The large dining room is impressive, castle like, with ten soldier / waiters along both walls, one for each seat. Apparently the commander wants his younger officers to prove they have "manners" in the presence of ladies. They are decked out in their dress uniforms, and they prove it with polite, intelligent conversation. The dinner is lamb curry with rice or potatoes. After desert, flan, drinks are served to us and to some officers who ask for it. Romana sits across the table from me flanked by two officers. She seems to like the Peppermint Schnapps a lot. When we get up she hangs heavy on my arm and wonders why the floor is swaying. Work and meetings take up only a day or two and the trip home is uneventful.

Home for Christmas 1958

Work in Makerwal came to an end and we traveled to Lahore where Romana stayed with the Serra family while I flew to Chittagong again for two weeks. Then we left the car, with the intention of coming back the following year, and returned to Switzerland in December 1958. First stop was the company main office. They had no signed contracts in hand, just lots of "irons in the fire". I was offered an unappealing office job while they would be waiting for other overseas work. Nothing was in sight for at least a year. We enjoyed a short vacation, living temporarily in my parents' attic bedroom. Looking for a used car, I found a "Buick" sedan, 1956 model, at Agence Americaine and bought it.

As I always did on home leave, I visited my previous employers Rapp AG and Gruner Brothers. Gruner had just entered into a contract for a major project in Syria, then a part of the United Arab Republic, needing engineers to work there for several years. I talked to Eduard Gruner about that Syria project. He proposed to hire me for the pressure grouting and tunnel work but send me there with other Swiss engineers by ship. His standard contract provided that the wife would follow three months later at the end of a probation period. I countered that I would either drive there in my own car with Romana, or else keep looking for another job. He replied that this would be a deviation from their standard contract and he would have to think it over. Fine, I was ready to leave his office when, after a minute's reflection, he said "OK you are hired". Next day I made my peace with Swiss Metallurgical Corporation in an amicable fashion and wrapped up loose ends of the Pakistan jobs during the following week.

Christmas was celebrated with the two families at home. To try out the Buick we drove to Arosa with Yvonne for a New Year's party ringing in the year 1959. The car was black, even more comfortable than the Chevrolet, had less mileage, and four brand new Goodyear "Double-Eagle" premium tires. It was the top of the line with more chrome than any other car on the road. As had become routine by now, we obtained visas for Yugoslavia and the United Arab Republic and collected the essentials for the trip.

Work and Life in Syria

Driving to Syria

Leaving by car has become familiar, but having a sewing machine, kitchen utensils and other household items is new. We leave in mid January 1959 via Italy, Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey to Syria. Unlike during the last two trips, we notice a difference in some border procedures: border guards of Yugoslavia ask to see our road maps. They point to the Italian city of Trieste where we stayed the night before and claim it for Yugoslavia! "The Italians stole it from us". Well, I have to "correct" the printed borders with my fountain pen to satisfy them. I am tempted to ask them just how much territory they would like back, but suppress my sarcasm. Greek guards are not that particular and we sleep in a hotel in Saloniki on the Mediterranean shore.



Early in the morning we leave, driving up into the coastal mountains on a winding road. It is still dark and I fail to notice black ice on a curve, but the black ice does notice us. We slide off the road and roll once, coming to rest with the Buick's sturdy roof in the dirt and the wheels up in the air. I stop the engine, shut off the lights and we crawl out the passenger side window. There is a strong smell of gas but no visible leak. Luck in our misfortune comes in the form of a group of Greek soldiers or border guards in a truck right behind us. They come running and roll the car right side up within seconds. The middle of the roof is about four inches lower than before and one side door will not open, but the other three are alright, no glass is broken and the engine starts. In the next town I check the fluid levels, wash the dirt off and we continue the trip with less than an hour lost. Entry into Turkey requires similar border corrections on my road maps. We stay in Istanbul again and then proceed through Ankara and Kayseri, being snowed in for a day, to Adana.

Syria is partner with Egypt in the United Arab Republic (UAR), under President Gamal Abdel Nasser. We reach the border and, upon presentation of my letter from the El Ghab Project Administration, are duly welcomed. Then comes the expected question for our road maps. First they challenge the Turkish border, claiming Iskenderun as their own. but the French allowed the Turks to steal it. So I "rectify" that border. Then, oh boy, what is this? They avoid saying it but point at the name "Israel". Discussion among them leads to a "solomonic" judgement: first, cross

out the offending name; second, write "n'existe pas" (does not exist) under it; third, write "Palestine occupee" (occupied Palestine) over it; and finally make ink drops over each letter of the offending name so they are no longer visible. We enter our new host country with a map that calls its southern neighbor, "Occupied Palestine / does not exist"!

The Oronte River Project

The Oronte River originates near the ruins of Baalbeck in the Beekaa Valley of Lebanon. It flows north to the Syrian city of Homs where a dam built in the second century before Christ forms Homs Lake still holding water. The river then flows further north through the city of Hama, famous for its creaking, huge, wooden waterwheels called "Norias" lifting water as high as 70 feet since ancient times. From Hama it flows slowly through the 15 miles wide and over 50 miles long, barren "El Ghab" (the forest) valley. Before its outlet into the Mediterranean near the Turkish border a rock sill at Kfeir turns the lower plain into swampland. The roadless El Ghab is not usable for agriculture, because it is flooded a few weeks each year, followed by drought the rest of the year. Oleander bushes, sparse vegetation and salt grass barely support the herds of wandering nomads.

In prehistoric times, the valley must have been fertile and, to judge by its name, even forested. From 312 to 64 B.C. the ancient city Apimie had a population of 120,000 with 40,000 animals and 600 war elephants! Now Apamea is merely a seasonal camp for sheep herders. The multipurpose project now to be constructed will have two major earthfill dams: Rastane and Mehardeh. A weir structure at Acharneh will feed two 30 miles long irrigation canals on each side of the valley. At the valley's outlet, the rock sill at Kfeir will be breached by a deep, 30 miles long channel capable of discharging ten thousand cubic feet per second. The combined effect of all these facilities will be to retain water for the dry months and years, stop flooding during the rainy season, distribute gravity-irrigation water and assure ample drainage.

Work on the Rastane Dam

Gruner Brothers designed both dams and the weir. Now our team supervises construction by Bulgarian state-owned contracting enterprise "Technoimpex". Chief Engineer Mr. Hubacher and his wife are already on the jobsite near Rastane and welcome us. We will live in a brand new stone building at the edge of the high plain overlooking the deep, narrow Oronte Valley. Our bungalow has an apartment for the chief engineer, communal kitchen and dining room and private rooms for two families. Two VW Beetles are for local transportation of the Gruner team.



HAMA
(SYRIA)
MIT DEN RÖMISCHEN
HOLZWASSERRÄDERN
(NORIA)



ALTERTÜMLICHE GRÄBER
BEI HAMA (SYRIA)



Across the highway is a construction camp for about fifty Bulgarian workers on bachelor-status and a dozen engineers and managers, some with families and children. A kitchen and canteen serves meals round the clock for day and night shifts. Upon entering the canteen we pass a



small desk where a Bulgarian man keeps track of the meals eaten, for later billing to one's account. From the looks of it, I suspect he is a secret police man, observing who regularly congregates with whom. The communist party is prohibited in Nasser's U.A.R. but foreign aid from the communist bloc is welcome. One of the Technoimpex executives is Mr. Tomov, our designated liaison. He is the only Bulgarian allowed to talk about anything, even politics. All the other Bulgarians avoid it, making small talk instead. We have good relations with all of them and consider them our new friends. They have a job to do and so do we. One family, the Nedekovs with two children befriends us. Both husband and wife studied at the American University in Sofia before the

Soviet takeover. Each Wednesday a dozen Bulgarians meet in the canteen, closed to anyone else for those two hours. These are the party officials, some high ranking, others just workers and I know them all. When questioning Mr. Tomov about these meetings, he calls it just a "study group", but we know better: it is the party meeting!

Lunch and dinner are usually eaten in the Bulgarian canteen, where the food from their clean kitchen is rather monotone but edible. We usually have our own Swiss table, but try not to always separate ourselves from others. Working-day wear in the hot, dusty field office is khaki, jeans or coveralls. Our suitcase is full of that. Romana works part time in the office, doing translations and other office work. The Buick has been repaired and painted two-tone blue and white in the contractor's workshop. It looks even flashier than when it was all black. March 1st 1959 we are invited to a reception at the Bulgarian Consulate in Damascus, hosted by Mr. and Mrs. Georgiev, Manager of Technoimpex. This is a full dress occasion. Romana wears her best cocktail dress and I my tuxedo. Some older guests speak French, younger ones English. German would be frowned upon. We take this opportunity to spend a few days in this ancient city, then ride by taxi to the famous desert city of Palmyra where Queen Semiramis reigned in ancient times.

"First of May 1959"! Even without red flags or red stars, we all know what the reason is for this feast. Syrians are not invited to the party. I personally know all the workers of the drilling and the tunnel crews and sit at their table for this occasion. Many toasts are offered, each one more emotional than the one before. Standing and holding a bottle or glass filled with "Slivova" (prune brandy) high, the crowd applauds each toast and then most empty their glass in one gulp. Anytime people at a table start a song, most of them revolutionary themed, the whole canteen joins in. Accompanied by an accordion they sing the "Internationale" several times, and I dazzle them with my knowledge of all the German words to it. I close my eyes and see the Frenchman in Sarajevo. I can not hate these jolly communists. Romana stays sober and leads me in a daze home across the highway. Next morning the whole camp is suffering a hangover as work resumes its regular routine, but there is a lot of laughing and backslapping remembering last night.

Soon two other Swiss engineers arrive, Hans Schwegler and Ernst Schellenberg. They crossed the Mediterranean by ship and arrived by taxi in our camp. It is good to have these friends, and we take many trips together to Homs, the nearest city, and to the coastal towns of Latakia and Tripolis. Among the Syrian employees of the El Ghab Administration are some Christians with Greek or Armenian names and we have an active social life with them, going to movies, picnics and dances. Muslim colleagues are also good friends but a little more reserved. Mr. Asouz and his wife join us for some events like shopping, a picnic or a local wedding. His wife is modern and wears no veil. Egyptian engineers are also working on the project and they make a good impression, being hard working and not corrupt. Three French factory mechanics, Andre, Rene and Jean maintain a fleet of large "Bernard" off highway trucks. Romana receives a puppy, "Pluto", an Anatolian steppe breed with large paws. Before he is fully grown somebody poisons him. I go rabbit hunting in the El Ghab valley with the Bulgarian camp doctor and others.

One summer day, the wife of the quarry superintendent, Mrs. Nedekov, comes to our room trying to sell her sewing machine. She is very upset about being ordered home to Bulgaria. That evening we drive to Homs when we see Technoimpex's "Volga" station wagon stranded along the open roadside. The driver and the canteen guard are staring into the open hood. We stop, wanting to help as the Nedekov family, parents and two children, race out of the station wagon without any luggage and pile into the Buick's backseat. Without a second thought I drive away. On the road to Homs we learn that the family is being forcibly repatriated for political reasons. We are sorry to hear it but what can we do? I suggest we might go see a movie together while they wait for their car, driver and guard in Homs, making the best of a bad situation. They sort of agree. After checking into our hotel, we go to the movie house. No Nedekov's are in sight. We have lost them.

End of October 1959 we welcome newlywed Mrs. Schwegler, Gisela, into our group with a dinner at the Swiss bungalow. Next morning she shows up for breakfast neatly dressed in something fashionable and colorful while Romana wears her usual field-office-drab. What a crisis! I do not notice the difference but learn about it quickly and in no uncertain terms. Well, the initial misunderstanding is cleared up between the two ladies and they become good friends. Work goes on and our agent in Damascus, Mr. Djabri comes to visit from time to time. He is an engineer with a doctorate from the Swiss Polytechnic Institute and a Muslim. On one of his rare walks through the mud to the tunnel portal, in borrowed rubber boots but otherwise impeccably dressed, a Syrian tunnel worker calls out to him in Arabic, "Sir, are you a Christian?" He answers, "No, I am a Muslim". Then the worker politely reaches for the colorful cord that is inadvertently crossed around his Arab head dress and straightens it into perfectly parallel loops, saying, "Then, you should not wear a cross!"

Nasser and Tito Visit Rastane Dam

A "State Visit" is announced: President Nasser will receive President Tito of Yugoslavia and they will visit the project. As a precaution, two Yugoslav expatriates working here are temporarily relocated to a hotel in far-away Palmyra. Everything is presentable as the big day arrives. Among the convoy of visitors and police is also the US consul and a consular attaché. I offer our Buick to help give the many visitors a tour of the jobsite. Without being invited the two Americans enter the Buick and say: "Let's go!" I oblige even though we could have comfortably accommodated two or three more riders. While driving to the tunnel portal the attaché asks: "are you Werner Ruemmele?". "Yes I am". Next he says as a matter of fact, "Then you know the

Nedekov family". After I say yes, he stops me abruptly from telling the story. Why? I am sure he knows the story and the consul needs not know the details. I can only surmise that the Nedekovs must have taken the bus to Damascus that fateful night and asked for asylum in the USA, giving my name as a reference. We helped them escape without knowing it.

The climate is much more moderate here in Syria than in Pakistan. Every evening after sunset we have a cool breeze as air over the Mediterranean cools. Fall is the most pleasant season with warm days and cool nights, followed by winter without snow but cold winds. The tunnels were holed-through in June and concrete lining is now also completed. The grout curtain is also finished and my contract with Gruner is over. We leave Rastane on the 17th of December 1959 and drive home in four long days, surprising my mother again. It is less complicated to cross the borders without roadmaps and I now know the road by heart anyway. I finish the grout curtain report in the Gruner main office on the Nauenstrasse Basle and sign another short term contract to go back to work on the Mehardeh Dam. We celebrate Christmas and New Year with the families and get ready to leave again on the 1st of February 1960. Before leaving I take the one-week federal exam for the title "Baumeister / Tiefbau" (Master Builder / Heavy Construction), requiring applicants to be at least in their 30th year. I think I passed but am not sure.

Work on the Mehardeh Dam

During the three years since my first trip to Yugoslavia, conditions of the road and at the border crossings have steadily improved. There are now regular gas stations along the road in Yugoslavia and the Macedonia highway is paved. We enjoy the trip, take it easy and remember not to leave Saloniki before dawn! Mehardeh, west of Hama is a small, predominantly Christian farming village. Many families have relatives in the USA or Canada. We befriend the doctor who tells us all there is to know about this town. He drives a Pontiac and that makes us kindred spirits. Large plowed fields are worked with modern



BAUER VON SEDJAR
(SYRIEN)

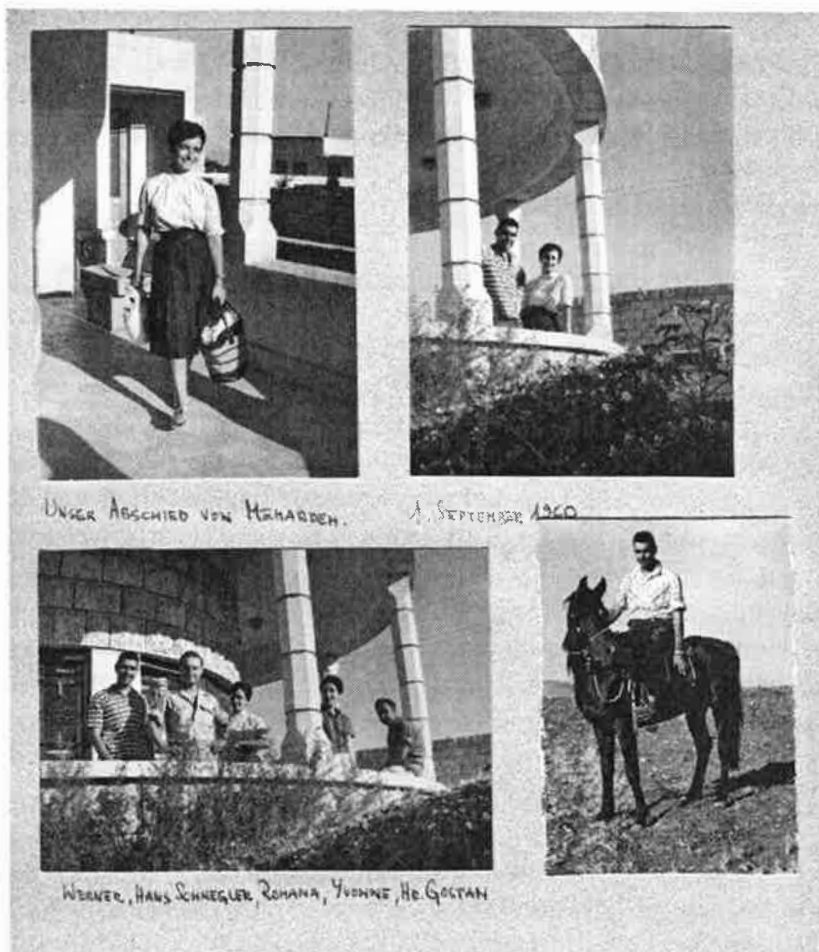


SYRIEN



BEDUINENZELT
VOR
UNSEREM HAUS
IN
MEHARDEH

agricultural tractors and harvested with combines. There are no wooden plows in this town! We rent two rooms with cooking and bathroom facilities in the modern, new, wall-surrounded house of a landowner. All around our house are Beduin (Nomad) tents. The men work on the dam and the women tend the herds. Townsfolk do not like their presence but put up with it because it may only last a year. When the landowner sees Romana filling Beduin girls' jars with water from our garden hose he is quite upset. I talk to him, and remind him of the obligation to give water to those in need, but he is a Christian and says these are only Muslims. Life goes on and we enjoy our months in Mehardeh surrounded by the tents. I read my entire library of technical books and Romana makes many friends among the girls and women, to whom she talks in her limited Arabic language helped by gestures.



An ancient Roman castle "Sedjar", later reused and fortified by the crusaders is now in ruins. It has a small tunnel underneath it that must be capped to preserve stored water in the future reservoir. First somebody has to explore it. Hans Schwegler, Ernst Schellenberg and I decide to do it and step into the murky water equipped with flashlights, compass and measuring tapes. The tunnel is usually about three feet wide at the top, but three feet down from the roof it is as little as one foot wide. Hundreds of bats hang from the roof, fluttering away as we enter. In places the standing water is so close to the roof that we must hold our heads sideways to allow breathing. How good the sunshine looks to us as we exit the downstream portal dripping wet after these arduous three hours!

Beirut, Capital of Rich, Modern, Beautiful Lebanon



This is the greatest city in the Levant, overlooking the eastern shore of the Mediterranean. Jerusalem and Damascus have more biblical significance, but Beirut has a harbor and its commercial center serves the region and beyond. We visit it often on weekends for dining and dancing at the "Cave du Roy" or the St. George hotel. In the grandiose new "Casino du Liban" oil-rich Saudis gamble away their fortunes. Romana and Gisela take a vacation enjoying "la dolce vita" in the cool resort town of "Bois

de Boulogne" on the west slope of the Lebanon mountain range, while their husbands slave away in the dusty heat of Mehardeh and Rastane! My main attraction in Lebanon is original Coca Cola, a break from Sinalco, the only soft drink available in Syria.

Shall we go to America?

Work proceeds well and turns into a routine through the summer months. As the earth-fill rises we can see the end of this project coming. Gruner Brothers have no immediate overseas project and again, like so many times before, I ask myself : "What next"? For the past several years we both knew that our work in the Third World will someday come to an end. I also knew that I could get a Professional Engineers License in California, but never in Switzerland. American construction companies working overseas pay their engineers more, provide air-conditioned housing, give them new company cars and have teachers and doctors in their camps. It only takes five years to become a US citizen, and then we could always work overseas again as Americans. On a trip to Damascus we discuss it one more time and decide to go to the US consulate and fill out immigration applications. The conditions are explained to us, nothing to worry about, so we sign the forms and let the wait begin. We are told it could take from half a year to a year, but the clock is now ticking. A letter from home informs me that I passed the Master Builder exam and have a Swiss federal diploma ready for framing. What for?

Vacation on the Black Sea, then Home Again

My work is done and we are ready to leave. Romana's sister Yvonne flies to Beirut in late August 1960 where we meet her. We spend a few days showing her the cities of Beirut and Damascus. She will ride home with us in the car. Farewells are said to all at the project. The manager of Technoimpex, Mr. Georgiev, hands us a special farewell gift: a coupon for one week's vacation at a Bulgarian state-owned resort near Nessebar on the shores of the Black Sea, and letters of introduction for all the formalities that go with a tour through Bulgaria. Thanks a lot! Back on the road through Turkey, we head for Edirne and the Bulgarian border. The letter does wonders at the border; we are welcomed and given directions where to stay for the night and how to reach the resort town next day.

Modern two story hotels face the beach in a park-like setting. Most of the guests are privileged East German party members and their families. There is music and dancing every night, with a good band playing recent German hit tunes. Suddenly the band stops, drum-roll, a somber speaker says something in Bulgarian that stuns the personnel, followed by a German speaker translating that comrade X, head of the German communist party, has died today. Everybody stands for a minute of silence. I am embarrassed because during that minute, Romana and Yvonne can hardly suppress their laughter over some unrelated stuff. Fortunately nobody else noticed it. No more dance music tonight, except, of course an emotional singing of the "Internationale" at closing time. This time I do not join in singing.

After a pleasant week of vacation we leave the Black Sea resort. The countryside is green and harvest is in full swing along the road, but the farming towns and farm houses look impoverished. This is still a poor country and the people look sad. We reach Sofia, the capital, during the evening rush hour. Streetcars are jammed and pedestrians dodge bicycles. Few cars are seen and our Buick causes people to stop and want to talk to us. A student who speaks English gives us directions to the only hotel open to foreigners, easy to find in its postwar Stalinist

architectural “splendor”. Room ceilings are sixteen feet high and the bathroom is marble clad. This is not a pleasant place to stay and I suspect that the room is “bugged”. We leave for Yugoslavia on good highways. Belgrad, Zagreb and Lubiana pass by our windows as we are anxious to cross the Iron Curtain back to Italy, where life and customs are familiar and we feel free. Trieste, Venice, Milan and Lugano put us finally in a real holiday mood.

A Postscript Dated 1997

Our friends, the Schweglers, took a tour through Syria in the spring of 1997. Here is what they reported about the El Ghab Valley:

March 27th 1997;

We ride the bus over the Alawite mountain range on a new highway, directly into Acharneh. I can not believe what I see: where our temporary construction shack used to stand in the desert is now a city of 20,000 people with four-lane streets, planted medians and roundabouts. Traffic is heavy.

The entire El Ghab valley is now a fertile, agricultural area. It must be the most fertile area of Syria. There are vegetable plantations, olives, apricots, cotton and wheat. Contrary to the time 40 years ago, Syria is now a net exporter of agricultural products.

We also visit the new, modern, arch-lined streets of Apamea. Mehardeh is so changed we have difficulty recognizing anything. There is much new construction, a new city entrance, sports stadium and telephone exchange building. Hama's “norias” are still turning, lifting water, but the city is now surrounded by new residential sections and much improved.

It is gratifying to learn from his letter almost forty years later, that our two years in Syria did some good after all. We have also seen this area on Google-Earth from the air and confirmed, in amazement, the positive change our earlier work has helped bring about.

New Year 1960/61

Getting Ready for the New World



Gruner & Jauslin Engineers are supervising the construction of a stretch of the new Swiss "Autobahn" through the Hard Forest east of Basle. I am hired to work there for a few months while we wait for our US immigrant visas. For the first time in many years am I involved in truly modern, fully mechanized earthmoving and structure work. This is a far cry from the methods used in Syria, let alone Pakistan. It is also the only time when anyone recognizes my new diploma, "Master Builder". We live in my parents' attic apartment again and take in as much of Basle's social life as we can in the short time. The visas arrive in December 1960 and we book our passage to America on the SS United States right away. Again I must inform the civil and military authorities of our departure. The records of Allschwil show "left for Texas USA" under our names.

New Years morning 1961, the Sütterlin family, our friend Walter Schär and the two of us cruise through the city of Basle in a horse-drawn coach singing in the New Year. We are pictured on the front page of the newspaper as we pass the historic "Spalentor" (city gate) in our top hats waving and singing. Good Bye Basle!



Part Five

To the New World

With Seven Suitcases to the USA

As many times before, I wrote lengthy "reports" home, reflecting our fresh impressions as newcomers to the USA of the sixties. Much has changed since then. I was 32 and Romana was 23 years old. We considered it just an other phase of our traveling life, maybe only five years. The following translations of our reports describe how it was and how we felt back then.

Crossing the Atlantic, Report # 1 - February 1961

On the 17th of January 1961 we leave Basle by train for Bremen. The ten hour train ride is very comfortable. We eat in the dining car and even sleep a little. The landscape flying by the window is snow covered and the highways icy. I am glad not to have a steering wheel in my hands! Hotel Columbus in Bremen is comfortable and clean. After six hours of sleep we get up at 6 AM, taking the harbor train to Bremerhafen. It is bone chilling cold outside, but turning sunny as we reach the North Sea shore. By 11AM we are on board the SS United States, "Worlds Fastest Liner" says their slogan. The ship is eight years old, modern, clean, efficient and fast! Our cabin is smaller than it looked in the brochure but the beds are comfortable and we have our own bathroom. Departure is 1PM as six small tugboats push and drag the ship away from the moorings.



BREMERHAFFEN, 18. JANUAR 1961. WIE WERDEN EINGESCHIFFT!



SEPTEMBER 1960 IN PRATELN
PIUS + WALLY + C. AUF BESUCH IN DER SCHWEIZ.

The ship's railing and the shore are crowded with people waving. An American military band plays farewell tunes for departing soldiers and officers. "Auf Wiedersehen" and "Muess I denn zum Staetele raus" moves Romana to tears and I have a lump in my throat. As the ships' engines start up, tug boats disappear; harbor buildings look smaller and lose their color until finally the coast is just a thin gray line in the haze. Farewell Europe, see you again, but when?

We settle down to the routine of shipboard life, exploring the different facilities, the cinema, the ballroom, outside decks and exercise rooms. The light swinging motion of the ship turns into a rocking and rolling. We hold on to handrails when possible. Dinner is served and we are in the first group. The food is ample but tastes strange. I suspect the sauces have been delivered by tanker truck and must be used up before we reach New York. Meat, vegetables and salad taste bland. To be on the safe side, we eat just enough to satisfy our hunger. Romana feels a little ill already. An evening concert and dance is next, with music by a mediocre four man band. We try to dance but it is not easy when the floor tilts as much as 10 percent one way, followed by 10 percent the other way. We give it up and go to sleep early.

On deck next morning, we see many fishing boats as we enter the English Channel. We play shuffleboard, rest on deck chairs and meet other passengers, mostly Americans. A fine drizzle drives us inside as we approach Portsmouth to take on more passengers. Next day we are out in the North Atlantic and the ship is now really rocking. We never stay out of bed longer than a few hours. Romana is seasick and I am just hanging on. Waves are 50 feet high. In the cinema we can lay low in the seats watching a movie, but the curtains sway back and forth with hypnotic rhythm making us only sicker. So we go back to our cabin. The stewards tell us this is the worst passage in many years. Speed is reduced to one quarter of maximum and we learn that there is going to be a one day delay in arrival. The purser telegraphs to all passengers' hotels in New York to change reservation dates. We realize that a January crossing of the North Atlantic is no picnic but it is survivable.

Early morning of the 25th we see the famous New York skyline in the distance. It is an experience to watch the city come slowly closer, with skyscrapers standing tall behind rows of ten story buildings, industrial warehouses and dock cranes. The Statue of Liberty welcomes us, as so many before, to the ice covered Hudson River as tugboats tow the ship to the dock. We step on land, make it through customs with the help of a porter, and ride to the Taft Hotel on Seventh Avenue by cab just in time for lunch. The room costs \$ 17.00 per night, and food another \$ 10.00 a day in the hotel. In cheaper restaurants we find quick-lunch-plates for 99 cents. We have to move out of this expensive city, but first we go see "My Fair Lady" on Broadway at \$ 8.00 per person. The audience is well dressed, no pullovers, casual wear or open shirt collars. We also dance in the hotel's ballroom to a great band playing boogie-woogie, be-bop, rock-n-roll, cha-cha-cha and even a waltz or two. Most couples are in their 50' or 60's, and tireless dancers. Romana notices that the distinguished older ladies wear cheap fashion jewelry, not their genuine jewels or solid gold. Maybe they are afraid of thieves and robbers in this big city.

Our Own Set of Wheels

This is America and we need a car like everybody else. Visiting several nearby used car showrooms, we find a good selection at Chrysler Manhattan. Our choice is a 1956 Plymouth Suburban Sport station wagon for \$ 1,740.00, previously owned by Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt of Hyde Park. It has brand new tires, a V8 engine, low miles, and is white with a red interior and seems well kept. Insurance and license are obtained and the seven suitcases brought to the garage so we can leave. I notice that the new spare tire has been replaced by a slick worthless tire. Protesting to the sales manager, he acts surprised but somehow finds the one that was in the trunk when we bought the car and we can leave. Shame on Chrysler Manhattan! Since our destination is out of state, we have not paid New York City sales tax. A dealership driver has to transport the vehicle past the state line to the point of delivery. We leave at 5 PM on slick roads and it is

already dark. The driver must be in a hurry to get home. Racing through the rush hour traffic he enters a toll tunnel and suddenly stops, gets out and slams the door. Behind us a mad driver honks. I slide over and start driving the car for the first time. Through ice and snow we drive 30 miles, finding a motel for \$ 9.00 a night near Newark.

On to Sunny Florida

We rise early and leave after a cup of coffee, heading for the "New Jersey Turnpike", pay the \$ 2.00 toll and are on our way south. The turnpike has three wide lanes in each direction with paved shoulders and wide, landscaped medians. Drivers are well disciplined, stay in their lanes and most vehicles, even heavy trucks, maintain the minimum speed of 60 miles per hour and the maximum speed of 70 mph. Passing is allowed either left or right. We cross New Jersey and a corner of Delaware, bypass Washington DC to the State of Virginia. The snow is gone, but we hear on the radio that the New Jersey Turnpike behind us has been closed because of snow. Some towns along the road look rich, others dilapidated like slums, with yards full of discarded furniture and garbage.

It is Sunday and we go to Catholic Mass in Richmond, Virginia. The parking lot around the wooden church is filled with late model cars and the church is full of well dressed parishioners. On the left side of the altar is an American flag. The collection plate has many dollar notes in it. Americans seem more religious than Europeans. Placards along the highway often have religious messages. After church we drive through the city and see both rich and poor neighborhoods, factories and shopping centers. The area has large trees and is green and fertile. Some snow is visible on the distant hills, but it is getting warmer as we drift further south. Farm houses are not like those in Switzerland. Here they vary from simple, small shacks to elaborate mansions with mansard roofs as seen in English mystery movies. We cover 300 miles before we stop in a small motel near Dillon for the night. The room costs \$ 4.00 this night. We order dinner at a small restaurant nearby and I ask for a beer. The waitress scolds me for trying to get her in trouble. "Why?" I ask. "You know very well that we may not serve beer on Sunday in this state!" Very well, I know now.

Further south we drive through some impoverished areas where most people are black. Upside-down cars lay rusting in the weeds of front yards with all four wheels removed and stucco peels from masonry. Windows are cardboard or newspaper covered. Swamps cover much land as we drive along the coast. Highway bridges and dikes are many miles long. As we enter Florida, employees at a government information pavilion serve free orange juice as a welcome gift and are helpful with maps and brochures. It is 65 degrees warm, the radio plays hit songs and I drive in shirt sleeves on the "Sunshine State Parkway" past Daytona Beach feeling no pain! On both sides of the highway is a nature reserve with flocks of long legged birds, ducks, geese, cranes and an occasional alligator. We use the roadside rest stops to eat lunch and reach Miami, our first milestone, in the evening. The Swiss family Hackspiel had invited us to visit them here before we left home. We stay three days in their large house and enjoy the city of Miami and some of its many attractions, among them "Lincoln Street". This is a pedestrian open mall where a free electric vehicle with trailers transports people slowly up and down along the shops. Merchandise is cheap and of good quality. Most buyers are old and retired. No wonder the State's song ends with "...there's where the old folks' at home"!

Driving "from Sea to Shining Sea"

Our loafing comes to an end and we hit the road westward on a cloudy morning the 4th of February. Inland of the Florida peninsula is mostly dry cattle ranching country with large Brahma, Hereford and Black Angus herds, swamps and ponds. Cattle ranchers produce beef while dairy farmers produce milk from Jersey, Guernsey or Brown Swiss cows. These are separate businesses, seldom owned by the same family. We stop for lunch at an all-you-can-eat barbeque place and order spare ribs for \$ 2.00 per person. Romana stops at four ribs but I eat nine, what a deal! Lake Wales entertains tourists each hour with a 100-bell "Glockenspiel" (bell playing) donated by a Dutchman who came here as a poor youth and died rich. Leesburg is our next overnight stop.

Along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico we cross the Swanee River made famous by the song. Antebellum mansions in parks date back to before the Civil War. Swiss painter Frank Buchser idealized the poor, black people over a century ago in colorful paintings sitting in front of quaint, idyllic shacks. We see none of that, but we do see three toilet doors at gas stations labeled: Ladies, Gentlemen, Coloreds. This is not where we want to live, so we keep moving. Our daily routine is like this: wake up at eight, breakfast in the room, fill the tank for \$ 5.00 good for 300 miles, buy food in supermarkets for \$ 5.00 , eat sack lunches at roadside rests, drive until five, then find a motel for about \$ 5.00 a night. One evening we stop at a modest motel with about a dozen cabins and only two cars parked in front. We ask for a room. The manager, a black gentleman, says he can not rent us a room but will not tell us why. He directs us to the next town and is sure they will have a room for us. Later we realize his motel was by law only for blacks and not for whites.

A light rain is falling this morning as we drive on good highways with little traffic along the Bay of Mobile toward Biloxi, Mississippi. A wide boulevard leads through the best section of the city, the Gulf shore lined with palm trees is on the left and historic mansions on the right. We want to stop for coffee in a garden restaurant, but – I hear brakes squeal, a crash and feel a jolt. We have been rear ended by a distracted lady in a new car. She is so nice about it, we can hardly believe it. No shouting or name calling. It is all just sheet metal damage and the rear left light is gone. She invites us to the garden restaurant for coffee while she calls her insurance adjuster, who shows up a half hour later. Learning that we are headed for California, the adjuster suggests we let him have the repairs made right here and now. But what about waiting for a few days? He offers to pay for our food and motel room, if we do not ask for lost wages. Lost wages – from what job? We agree and enjoy our stay in Biloxi for almost a week, reading, visiting historic mansions and talking to people about everything under the sun. When we leave this friendly place with a restored tail fin and rear light, we have a better understanding how these "Southern Whites" feel about themselves, the world, politics, race, Kennedy and Nixon.

I try to regain those lost days by covering more miles per day than before. Leaving early, Romana sleeps as I pass by the road to New Orleans and only wakes up later. Little do I realize how many times in future years I must hear about bypassing New Orleans without waking her up and visiting this unique city. We enter Texas and find that it takes over one thousand miles to cross it east to west. The landscape has changed from green to brown. Ranches are spread far apart with long dirt roads leading to the lonely mailbox along the highway. The highest structure is usually a windmill next to a water tank. Hay barn or silo are there, but no shelters for cattle that stay outside all year long. Houston is a large city with a port and much oil business. We have no time to visit it. Entering the hill country west of Austin, the state capital, we pass through many

towns founded by German or Czeck immigrants a hundred years ago. Anything older than one hundred years is "historic"! During our motel nights I start studying employment ads in the local papers. I would not mind working in Texas, but think wages are better in California. One evening I ask directions in a tavern near Fort Stockton and the bar is lined with men wearing cowboy hats. Is this a cowboy club meeting I wonder? No, that's what they wear every day. Western movies are not just imagination. It really still is like that.

We detour from our route and drive to the "Big Bend" National Park on the Rio Grande where we sleep in a small cabin. The mountain range is rumored to contain a "lost mine". We hike the ten mile trail and return tired and happy. This park is among the least visited in all of the National Park System. Most visitors are older people driving pickup trucks with campers or pulling camping trailers. Terlingua is a mining ghost town with masonry remnants of a bank, tall wooden store fronts and dry rotted timbers behind them. It must have been quite a roaring place when mining was good but has long since been deserted. Ancient ruins of Romans or Greeks may be more impressive, but these simple ruined walls could have been built by my great-grandfather. They are so close to our own times I can imagine living here, working the mines and whooping it up in those old saloons!

Passing El Paso, we see the Mexican half of the city across the river, looking like the poor section of a Turkish town. New Mexico's Las Cruces and Arizona's Phoenix are separated by hundreds of miles of arid mountains and desert. The few small towns between them live from mining, ranching and an occasional farm with pumped irrigation water. "Organ Pipe Cactus" dot the desert sand where Romana spots a few pronghorn herds in the distance. I stare ahead at the two lane highway through the simmering 100 degree heat, seeing illusions of "water" that disappear as we get closer, just like in Pakistan. Range cattle roam far and wide to find enough to graze on, then return and stand around water tanks waiting for the windmill to turn and pump more water.

It is mid February and the weather is already so hot that we carry two canvas water bags hanging from each rearview mirror. Every time we fill up with gas we also top the radiator off. Crossing the Mojave Desert and the San Bernardino mountains, we finally descend into the fertile plains of California's Los Angeles Basin. What a difference: orange groves, plowed land, fruit trees, small farming towns shaded by tall trees and heavy traffic on high-speed highways with four lanes in each direction. Los Angeles is still 30 miles away and we already have a traffic jam, driving stop and go bumper to bumper at ten in the morning. Having missed New Orleans, Romana insists we see Hollywood. So we cruise around the Glitter City for two hours, gawking at hidden mansions where movie stars are alleged to live from time to time, behind high walls. We see no famous stars except the ones encased in sidewalk concrete.

Northward we drive through the wooded coastal range via San Luis Obispo to Salina where we attend Sunday Mass. The congregation looks about half Anglo and half Mexican. This state, like most western states, was originally a Spanish colony and then Mexican territory. The misnomer "Anglo" is not just applied to people of English extraction but to all people of European ancestry, Italian, Greek, Russian and Swiss. So we have now also become "Anglos". Stranger things have happened. A San Jose radio station entertains us with an Italian program as we reach Redwood City and the home of my sister Valerie and brother-in-law Pius, the Lenz family. They are not home but the back door is open so we take two chairs out to the lawn and wait in the shade.

Living and Working in California and Oregon

Finding a Job in California

This is another world for me and a new task: finding employment. In the past I always had to choose which job to take from several available. Valerie helps me write a resume and I am off to interviews, mostly cold calls. The good news is: we see all of San Francisco and the surrounding Bay Area. The bad news is: none of the 25 companies I visit hire me. At Stanford University I pick up the past year's engineering license exam questions, just to see what I would still have to learn to pass it. After two weeks I decide to lower my expectations. A Swiss friend of Pius', Mr. Schneider, has a landscape business and needs workers. He offers me a job as landscape laborer at the minimum wage, but if there is survey or layout work to be done I can do it for an extra dollar per hour. I will start next Monday morning at seven. I must first obtain a social security number and card. My application says: landscape laborer at Schneider Company.

Sunday I buy rubber boots and coveralls. The phone rings and it is for me, one of the interviewers for an engineering company needs a construction inspector in Vacaville. "When can you start?" he asks, "Tomorrow morning," I say. Mr. Schneider does not mind, he just wanted to help a Swiss in need. We pack in a hurry, drive to nearby Vacaville the same evening and rent a motel room with a kitchenette at weekly rates. Next morning March 20th 1961 I drive to the office trailer of Stoddard & Karrer Co. outside town. The chief inspector gives me a pickup truck and my assignments. I obtain a California drivers license and am ready to work. It is simple work to be sure, but work paying \$ 120.00 per week. After two weeks we rent an unfurnished house on Lover's Lane in Vacaville. Furniture is bought second hand from the motel.

Vacaville Irrigation Scheme

A concrete dam was built ten years ago north of the city. Using the stored water requires a distribution system. The contractor, Granite Construction Company, is building canals, weirs, bridges and some piped irrigation in Suisun and Green Valley for the Solano County Irrigation District. My duty is to inspect concrete structures only, not the earthwork, not the road work, not the pipelines or the metal gate installation. I learn a lot of new terms and the lingo used on the two-way radio, ten-four! But I am not busy at all. After a month I talk to the Resident Engineer and tell him I could save his company a lot of money by inspecting the whole project and still have time to spare. He grins, puts his hand over his mouth and whispers, "Shhh! We are on a cost-plus contract"! Now I understand that I am just one of the "plusses", and he understands that I will not become one of his long-term employees.

We get to know some Swiss families and go square dancing and horseback riding once a week. Reading the daily newspaper helps Romana learn English. I always read the "help-wanted" ads, just in case. Passing by the contractor's field office every day, I also read the "Contractor's Daily". This is not a newspaper but a publication of state-wide bid results and invitations to bid for upcoming projects. Two months go by when Granite Company's estimator laments the loss of a bid for a 3 million-dollar dam in Northern California. I find out that the low bidder was Gibbons & Reed Company of Salt Lake City, Utah. During the lunch hour I send them a letter and resume. Two evenings later, a Friday, John Bowman of that company calls and only says in a slurred

voice, "Hi, do you want \$ 150.00 a week?" I ask if this is in response to my letter and what the job would be ? He grunts, "Be here tomorrow morning, we will tell you." I hear loud talk and music in the background and assume he must be calling from a bar.

Leaving early next morning we drive four hours north to Redding, then west into the hills to Whiskeytown (yes, that's the name). There is an office trailer sitting in a clearing along the road, not yet set up on concrete blocks or hooked up to power and phone. John is there and Roy, the project manager. We sit on the steps because it is too hot inside. Gibbons & Reed Company works all over the Western States. Here they now have that contract for the large Whiskeytown dam, and also two smaller dams at Lewiston and Spring Creek. They hire me as field engineer, for soil testing and other chores at \$ 150.00 per week. Before leaving the area, we stop at the first house for rent in the ghost town of Old Shasta and rent it, then drive back to Vacaville and, after only three months, pull up stakes and move to Old Shasta.

Whiskeytown Dam near Old Shasta - July 1961

All our worldly possessions are packed into a small, single axle U-Haul trailer and the back of the station wagon as we drive north through the sizzling Central Valley of California. Redding is where the palm trees end and the pine trees begin. Old Shasta is 700 feet above the valley, in forested hill country. It is a historic ghost town with remnants of storefront brick buildings along the highway, a National Monument. About one hundred people live in homes spread out over a square mile of Manzanita brush and pine forest. Our rented house is small but adequate, with red tarpaper shingles outside and knotty-pine walls inside. Pines and fir surround the house. Nature in some areas of the world has much in common. These are sub-alpine mountains. The fresh air and scent of pines reminds us of the Müller's cabin above Bennwil, or the Hill Stations of India and Pakistan. We like it here.

Old Shasta, Calif.
Oct. 1961



Bei EUREKA AN HEER,
CALIF.
10. SEPTEMBER 1961



We buy a "Palomino" horse and borrow a black horse from a friend, putting them up on a



hilltop pasture under tall pine trees, brush and enough grass to keep the two horses fed. There are lots of trails, most of them just overgrown old mine access roads ending high up on the mountainside at a long abandoned hole in the ground with a spoil dump and usually a beautiful view of the valley. We ride them after work and on days off. Joining a "Square Dance" group for weekly dance sessions and occasional trips to other towns for dance nights keeps us entertained. East of the town we buy a wooded five acre lot on a paved road, with water and all utilities for 1,200 Dollars, although old-timers tell us it is only worth half as much.

Our friend from Allschwil, Walter Schär, catches the travel fever from our letters and reports and decides to come to America. Not just America, but California, and not just California but Old Shasta of all places! He finds a job as a lineman / electrician at a nearby copper mine and rents an old house nearby. Now, we buy a second "Palomino" so that we have three horses to ride, and a matched set of "Palominos" for the parades in Redding. The "Longhorn" Saloon in Redding becomes our regular weekend hangout, where beer and steaks are served and the band leads noisy "sing-along's" until closing time. One of our favorite rides is over the mountains to Muletown and the Woehr family, retirees from the big city of San Francisco, who bought an old mine complete with tunnel and living quarters. They live there away from everyone, mining the gold vein as a hobby and always love to see visitors.

Climbing up the Career Ladder

Work is quite interesting and my previous experience is useful. Gibbons & Reed Company is a second generation highway and heavy earth moving contractor, but they have not built dams in recent years. The company vice president of the Northwest Division, Adrian Toolson, visits the project about once a month. He and the project manager take me for a tour to see our Lewiston dam project in the Trinity Alps. While driving, they casually say I could take over as project engineer of the Whiskeytown Dam. My friend Vyril Goff, at present the project engineer, would take over the smaller Spring Creek project. I wonder how this "demotion" would affect Vyril, but they have already cleared it with him. So, after only two month, I climb the next rung of the career ladder.

We have several superintendents and foremen on the job. One of them is a screamer who likes to intimidate his workers with verbal abuse. I have witnessed this behavior on many other construction projects, and it is always embarrassing just to be present and listen. The project manager does not let it continue. He takes the man aside, and talks calmly to him about his anger problem, advising him to consider psychiatric help. The foreman admits to a problem and tones down during the remainder of his employment on the job.

California Professional Engineer's License

Regardless of education or degrees, California requires all engineers to take state exams before engineering licenses are issued. The first exam is "closed books" called EIT (Engineer In Training), testing knowledge of the basics sciences involved in engineering. Vyril graduated from BYU University as a civil engineer but did not take the EIT exam. During winter we study together two evenings a week at our home, because at his home with five children he can not study, and he teaches me a lot. In spring of 1963 we travel to San Francisco and both pass that exam. The law requires five years of sub-professional practice before the next exam can be applied for. Two American foreign aid engineers who knew me in Pakistan certify my practice there and I am given permission to take the PE (Professional Engineer) exam in 1964. Again we spend many long winter evenings studying and are ready for our second exam in spring 1964. I pass and am issued California PE License No. 14829 on the 24th of August 1964.

Christmas of 1963

Yvonne has worked for Ciba AG in New Jersey under a company internal exchange program. Now she came to visit us in Shasta, and on her way here we enjoyed a night club tour of San Francisco. As was the custom, roaming photographers made the rounds of nightspots and sold photos within the hour. We have many of those from all over the world, and here is one with Yvonne at the "Purple Onion" in San Francisco.



Eastern Oregon on the Columbia River - July 1964

Work on the Whiskeytown Dam and tunnels is in full swing but the end is in sight. We move about 65,000 cubic yards of earth and rock per working day and place 500 cubic yards of structural concrete per week. I am sent around the western states to help the company bid new projects, dams, tunnels and Interstate highways. On average a company must bid six projects to get one. Near The Dalles, Oregon, we are low bidder by only 3/4 of a percent for a five-mile stretch of Interstate along the Columbia River. Most of the road is actually in the river, consisting of fill placed under water by dredge or barge. There are also two bridges, one a major crossing of the Deschutes River, the other over Fulton Canyon. While the contract award is pending I start looking for a place to live nearby.

Wasco is a small town of 320 people on the plateau above the river, surrounded by wheat fields. It has three churches and only one tavern. I arrive Sunday evening and ask the lonely bar keeper about rentals in town. He gives me two or three names. Then he takes a look at my Buick and advises me to park the car so people can not see the California license plates or the hardhat through the back window. Apparently Californians and construction workers are not well liked as renters. I take his advice and drive out to the Dutton farm. Their deceased parents' home in town is for rent. We seal the contract with a handshake and no paperwork. Again we pack our bags and fill a small U-haul trailer, but this time we also have to rent a two-horse trailer and tow them with

both cars. Leaving Shasta California for Wasco Oregon is just another move, routine for us by now, but we always leave good friends behind and can only take memories with us.

Warren, our First Son is Born

Life and work in the small town revolves around wheat and cattle. The seasons require certain tasks farmers and ranchers must do, and talk after mass on Sunday is about rain, harvest or market prices. Romana is expecting our first baby, we do not know if it will be a boy or a girl. Vern Dutton takes an interest in the construction equipment while his wife Dorothy, a former nurse, helps Romana with advice and organizes a baby shower. Doctor and nearest hospital are in The Dalles, a city about thirty miles away. On Veterans' Day, the 11th of November 1964 I have the day off and am at home. The baby is not quite due yet but Romana's pains are about every half hour and I call Dorothy. She tells me to take her to the hospital right away, and so we drive to the hospital at dinner time. While she is taken into a room to rest, the nurse tells me to go for dinner in town and come back later, because the baby may not come until next morning. I go to our favorite steak house and eat a good dinner in leisure. As I get back to the hospital Romana is just being wheeled into the delivery room. Less than a half hour later she has the baby, a healthy boy with lots of black hair. We name him Warren Pietro. My relatives in Switzerland are happy that the family name may now continue. We are also happy but this family name thing seems more important to them than to us.

From one day to the next, life has changed radically for both of us. No more locking the door on the spur of the moment and going for a carefree trip over the weekend. No more sleeping through the night without waking up. I still have to work long hours six days a week, but Romana is completely stuck in the home for 24 hours every day, nursing, changing diapers and cooking. One time while Warren is asleep she walks four blocks to the post office to pick up mail at our box. The post mistress asks where the baby is and scolds her for leaving him home alone. You can not do this in America! To get Romana a little relief we find an older neighbor lady who watches the baby a few hours each day so she can get out of the house.

Highway construction moves well ahead on the Oregon side of the Columbia River. We win another large contract on the Washington side to raise twenty five miles of SP&S railroad line above the future water level of John Day Dam under construction. It means a two hour commute each way for me most days, while I am working both jobs. It is December and the hills are covered by two feet of snow. Along the river, roads are snow packed when a hot "Chinook" wind blows in. I am on the Washington side when the radio reports melting snow and flooding. In twenty four hours the hills are bare of snow. Another contractor had just completed construction of a high, long Interstate bridge over the John Day River. It was assumed that the river at flood stage would slowly flow into the new reservoir behind the dam, but the reservoir is not yet there so the John Day River cascades down into the Columbia riverbed. The radio reports that two tall bridge piers are undermined by the raging water and, together with three long bridge spans, have settled a foot or two. The bridge is closed to traffic and barricades are quickly put up. It is night and everybody is anxious to go home. In a tavern in Rufus, three drunk ironworkers hear the radio report but decide their car could "jump" that settled bridge joint if it is only a foot or two. They drive around the barricade and speed up. In the meantime the bridge has completely collapsed and washed away. They do not know it and only apply brakes ten feet away from the abyss.

I can not drive home and must cross the river at Umatilla to get to the Oregon side. A motel owner helps me get a message to Romana through a CB radio contact in Wasco. It takes two more nights before I can get home, just in time for Christmas Eve.

Back to Switzerland for a Year

Romana's mother Elide visits us for several weeks and helps with the baby. The work on the Columbia River is wrapping up. Traffic is running on the Oregon Interstate and another contractor is laying railroad tracks on the Washington side. Rather than going to the next project, I ask the company for a one-year leave of absence. We have not really lived in Basle as a married couple and Romana thinks we should try it. It is an experiment we make, not knowing how it will end. Through an old friend I find a job as Chief Engineer with a large general contractor. We sell the horses and give away most furniture, leaving only our folding beds. Our new Buick Electra can be shipped to Amsterdam very cheaply with a fixed price for possible return to San Francisco, provided I am a passenger on the same Holland America Line ship. Romana and Warren fly to Switzerland while I take the ship through the Panama Canal.

We rent a small second-floor apartment near my new office. Adjusting to life in Basle is easy, being close to the family is great, but human relations at work are not harmonious. The owner, a third-generation heir, treats me alright for now but routinely subjects older senior staff and vice presidents to his loud outbursts of verbal abuse during staff meetings. I have not experienced this kind of behavior before, except on the foreman and crew level. Other than that, work would be OK if a bit dull and of much smaller scale than what I have done in the past. After ten months I consider looking around for a job change. Romana also finds that life is not quite as expected for many different reasons. One night, after seeing the Western movie "The sons of Katie Elder" showing the sweeping landscapes of the western states, Romana asks me, "why are we here and not there?" She does not have to ask me twice.

It is summer and we meet Pat and Virginia Gibbons who are on vacation in Switzerland. As they leave, Pat tells me he needs a Chief Engineer at the main office in Salt Lake City, and the job will be mine if I want to come back. I need not think it over for long and accept the job. We pack our accumulated stuff into a container. It is a gray fall day as we drive the Buick down the Rhine Valley "Autobahn" to Amsterdam for shipment to San Francisco. On KLM we fly to Salt Lake City, Utah on the 18th of October 1966. Two year old Warren wonders where his grandparents and other relatives have gone, not realizing that it was us who left. Flying over the Rocky Mountains reminds us of the Alps. The difference is: mountains are farther apart, fewer towns and no big cities, except for Denver and Salt Lake City. It is evening and the hills look dusty and colorless, not as green as Switzerland. Romana feels the difference more than I do. Mike Gibbons picks us up at the airport and drives us to a motel with a kitchenette on Foothill Drive where we live for thirty Dollars per week while looking for permanent housing.

Part Six

Following work all around the U.S.A.

Bountiful, Utah, our New Home

Report from Salt Lake City - February 1967

House hunting is always interesting, especially in such a big city. One 15-year old house with three bedrooms and a nice view southeast of Sugarhouse sells for about \$ 17,000.00. The Gibbons & Reed office is north of the city and we start looking north. In Bountiful we look at a house with great view, 1,500 square feet plus fully built-out basement and double garage for \$ 38,000.00. I could live with it but Romana does not like it. We realize that our tastes are different. So we start looking for land to build on. Our temporary house on 33rd south is leased for six months. By next May we will either have a house to move into or sleep on the street!

At the north-east corner of Bountiful is a new 15-lot subdivision with two dead end circles



Our home under construction

and only two new homes. We buy the last lot high on the hillside before Christmas for \$ 3,000. Our neighbor to the east and north is the Wasatch National Forest. With a survey instrument I place posts at the property corners. Over the holidays I draw house plans, remembering that I used to be a draftsman in an earlier life. Mid February we sign a contract to have our new home built for \$ 24,000.00. The builder, Frank Turner, is a one-man business. When he needs an extra hand his retired father comes to help him.

On a cold Wednesday we go to the Bountiful Building Inspector with my plans. After a look at the plans, we get a building permit for five Dollars. Together with the inspector we go to the lot. I step the shape of the building into the snow, place offset stakes and the inspector checks the distance to the property line. Thursday morning a backhoe excavates the basement and foundation trenches while Frank places foundation forms on the steaming sand and gravel right behind it. Foundation concrete is placed and covered after lunch, before the ground has a chance to freeze and covered with curing blankets. There is still a lot of snow on the ground. As the basement walls are formed, we can see the shape of the house. It will be small but adequate. In March the house is closed in and our company builds us a concrete driveway.

Early April we move in with the first load of stuff including mattresses. That is quite lucky, because we get much snow that afternoon and can not drive back out. So we sit on boxes eating dinner and enjoy a first beautiful sunset over Antelope Island and the Great Salt Lake.

Warren is now talking fluently in Swiss German to us and English to the occasional playmate or babysitter. Social life is influenced by the many LDS members (Mormons) who do not smoke, drink coffee or alcohol. Only state-owned liquor stores can sell alcohol. We attend the annual contractor's convention and ball, where ladies wear long dresses and men tuxedos. Some carry a brown paper bag with a wine or liquor bottle in it to the elegant event in the Hotel Utah. So we sit around a table offering each other a drink from our own bottle, while the waiter can only bring glasses and soda or mixer. One can get used to it and it is actually much cheaper this way. The Mormon Tabernacle Choir is famous worldwide, but the city also has a Symphony Orchestra, a Ballet and Opera Company. Some recently arrived foreigners complain about a lack of culture but never go to the many concerts or other performances.

A business trip takes us to Portland Oregon, over some of the highways I worked on two years ago. I still remember how this bare landscape looked before we started the earth work for the road. Now traffic is moving in both directions at 75 miles per hour. We stop in Wasco for a day to visit old friends, but leave the folding beds with them.

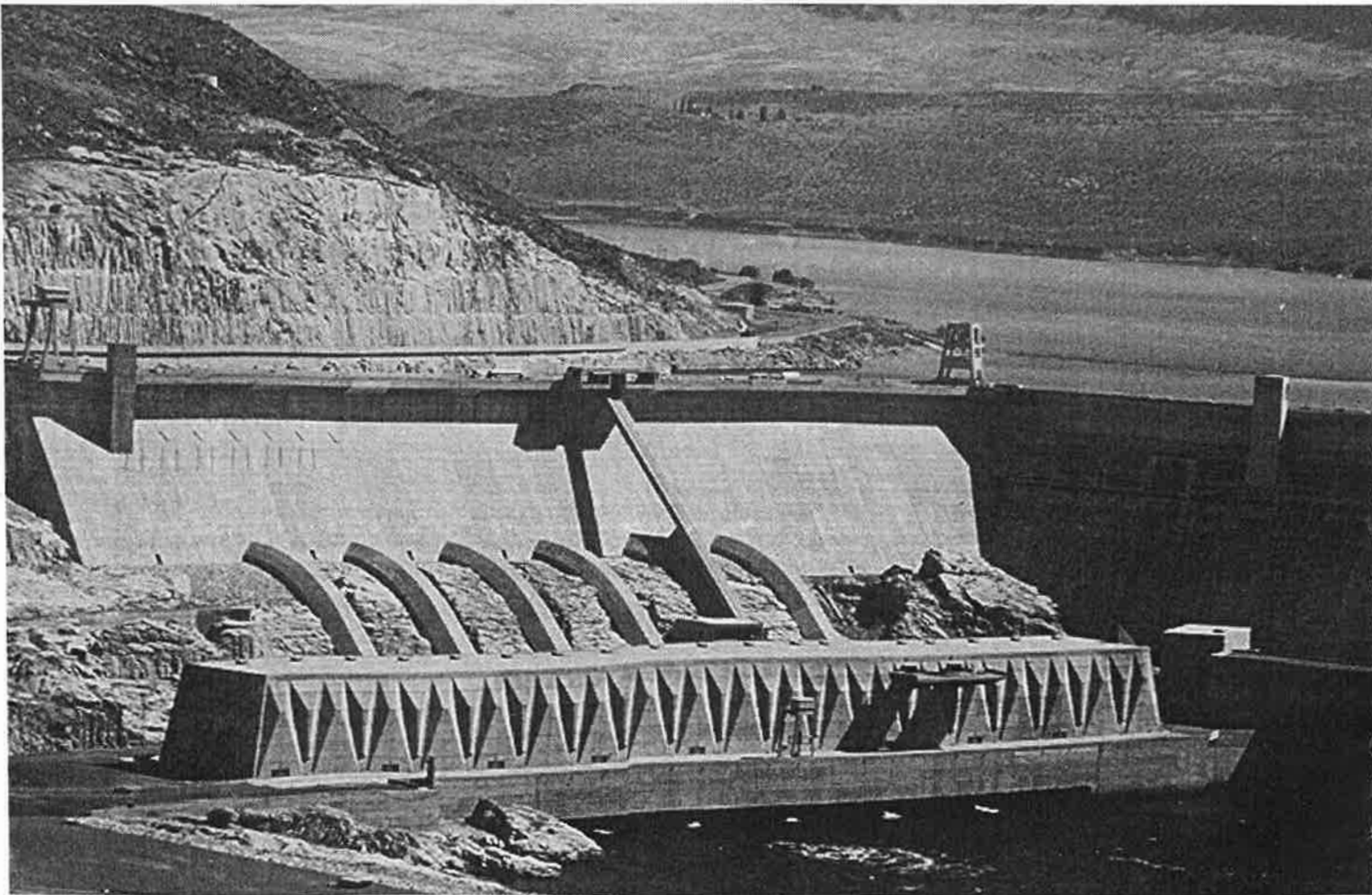
We are now US Citizens, 1967

It is a requirement that applicants for US naturalization take an exam, usually preceded by evening citizenship classes. Romana takes the classes and passes the exam. I do not have the time, because I travel too much. We have reached the required minimum of five years of residency for citizenship, and go to Ogden to the naturalization court. The judge, a lady, takes a dim view of my lack of classes and exam, so she gives me a short version of the exam right there and I pass. Then she asks why we left for a year and why this should not cause the five-year waiting period to start over again? How can we prove we intended to return? How indeed? Then Romana says to me "maybe the beds". "What beds?" asks the judge. I say : "our folding beds still in Oregon". "Did you sleep on those beds while you lived in California and Oregon?" she asks. Yes, we did every night for over four years. "That proves it, you can take the oath!" And so we are now dual citizens of Switzerland and the USA. According to our old plan of 1960, we could now look for overseas work as Americans, but that thought has left us long ago.

Building Dams, Tunnels and Interstate Highways in the West

Gibbons & Reed Company is the largest-volume heavy and highway contractor in the State of Utah. We hold contractor's licenses in all western states and have branch offices in Portland Oregon and Burlingame California. Construction of dams, tunnels and the Interstate Highway System is under way and we bid projects from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific and from the Canadian to the Mexican borders. Our twin engine "Aero Commander" airplane with professional pilot and co-pilot is flying most working days, ferrying managers, estimators and engineers to remote cities and jobsites. Slide rules and heavy mechanical calculating machines like "Friden", "Monroe" and "Burroughs" are the tools of the trade. Bids are finalized in motel rooms all night long, to be tendered at public bid openings the following morning. We often rent three rooms side by side and work in the middle one, so that the neighbors are not disturbed by phones ringing and the noise of calculators sounding like manual coffee grinders.

Most customers are: US Bureau of Reclamation, US Corps of Engineers, State Highway Departments or mining companies. My time is spent on estimating, scheduling, construction methods and dispute resolution. The title "Chief Engineer" is really a misnomer. I act as trouble shooter, but my Professional Engineer's licenses in several states put me on an equal footing when meeting with agency engineers and administrators. If we are awarded a job in a "new" state, I take that state's contractors exam and get a contractors license on behalf of the company. Work is hectic but I am not stressed by it. Unfortunately I am away many week days while Romana is at home and Warren is growing up, but I can usually fly home at least for the weekends. The map of the western states is dotted with so many projects I will only touch on a few of them.



Eisenhower Tunnel Bid

Located between Denver and Grand Junction is the 11,900 feet high Loveland Pass and the Continental Divide. A vehicular two-mile long tunnel for Interstate I-70 at elevation 11,160 ft is planned and we join a four-party joint venture to bid this large project. Managing partner will be Al Johnson Company of Minneapolis. An engineer and friend of ours from our year in Switzerland, Urs Berger, works for our company as an estimator and we put our bid together in Georgetown, while our families enjoy this mountain resort for two weeks. Our JV is lucky to have the low bid by a very slight margin and we are awarded the job at about 48 million Dollars. The name is, initially, "Straight Creek Tunnel". Work begins March 18th 1968, but Gibbons & Reed is only a silent partner and I am not involved in the work, except for an occasional visit.

Grand Coulee Third Power Plant Tunnels

The Columbia River is generating electric power at sixteen dams from northern Canada to the mouth of the river near Astoria Oregon. The largest of these is the Grant Coulee Dam. We build a steep decline tunnel for the new, third power plant. It is routine work. Two small spiral tunnels inside the concrete dam itself, however, are everything else than routine. Nor is the removal of large concrete wall panels that must be transported by two cranes over the running turbines and generators. I submit an elaborate plan for the tricky move and the Corps of Engineers colonel studies it in a meeting. This is an operation the absolutely cannot go wrong. If it did, the lights in the region would go out and stay out for a long time. The colonel looks at me and warns, only half in jest, that I risk arrest if we drop one of those 50 ton panels on a turbine. I reply, also half in jest, that I do have a Swiss passport just in case! Well, we all laugh, and looking back: nothing went wrong.

Wayne is Born While I am in New Mexico, 1969

Some years ago Gibbons & Reed joint-ventured with two other companies to build tunnels and structures from Southern Colorado to Northern New Mexico. The tunnel excavation phase did not go well and the project was mismanaged. Rather than pouring more money into a bottomless pit, Gibbons & Reed threatens to sue and then takes over management of the concrete lining phase. It is not a friendly takeover. I live in a trailer camp between Pagosa Springs CO and Chama NM during the week and usually fly home every other weekend. Romana is expecting another child, whether a boy or girl is not determined. Her brother, Gilberto, lives with us in Bountiful while employed as an exchange decorator at a local department store. As Romana is driven to the hospital by a neighbor after midnight, he watches little Warren at home.

The construction site and trailer camp has only one telephone line that is switched from the office to the superintendent's travel trailer every night. Grant Morby, the superintendent, is deaf on one ear. The night of the 26th March 1969 he must have slept on his good ear because he did not hear the phone ring at 2 AM. Only at seven in the morning do I receive the message : "You have another son and both mother and child are well"! It is snowing and dark as I drive as fast as the conditions allow to the Farmington NM airport, just in time to see the plane take off in the distance. Durango CO is the only other possibility to fly to Salt Lake City that day, so I head into the hills despite the snowstorm. Before reaching that airport I realize I will be late again, so I call the company. They send the company plane to Grand Junction CO and I can fly back and finally visit the hospital in Bountiful.

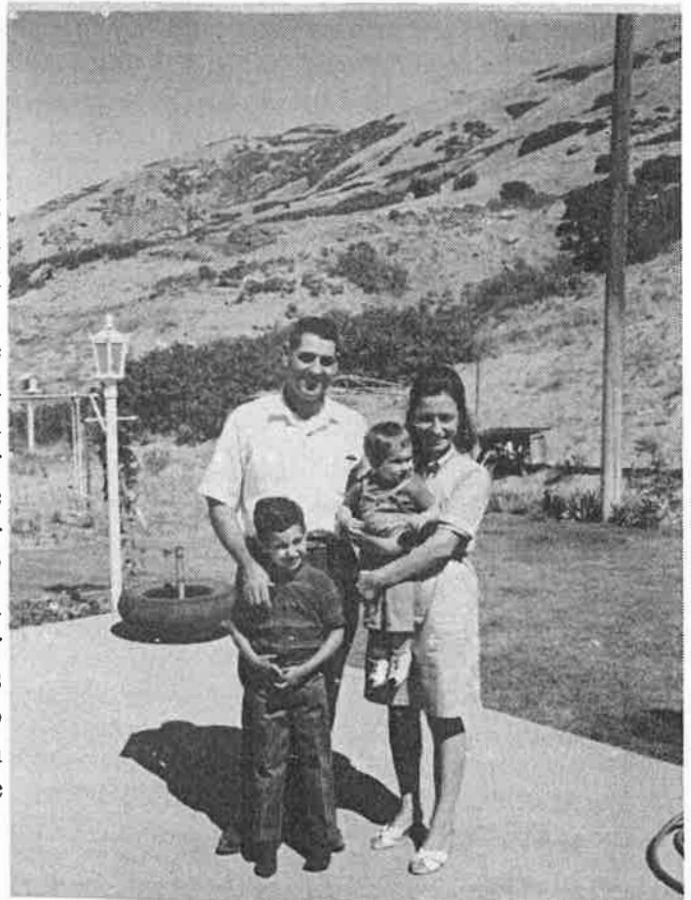
Wayne is a healthy boy and when he is six weeks old we all move to a mobile home in Chromo Colorado. There are other children of construction workers in the trailer park for Warren to play with and Romana has her hands full with the new baby. I work long hour in the eleven miles long tunnel and the structures on both sides of the Continental Divide. We work three rotating shifts and give workers, foremen, surveyors and shift bosses a choice to be assigned to a compatible crew. One crew consists of mostly hard drinking, smoking or tobacco chewing "Anglos", another shift are mostly Mormons and yet another are Spanish speakers. Native Americans chose whatever group suits them best. Looking back, it would now probably be called "discrimination", but it worked just fine and promoted harmony.

Kennecott Copper's Ray Arizona Dam, 1970



other is "bidding". It is best if the two tasks are performed by different people. Estimating requires most of all a good record of past production rates and a rational but neutral look forward to the conditions most likely to occur. It matters not what the competition is, or if the yard is full of idle equipment with no demand in sight. Bidding follows estimating. It is in sharp contrast to the previous disregard for circumstances. In fact it is all about the circumstances of the moment. Who are our competitors? Do we have a large backlog? Maybe we own the nearest source of sand and gravel. Is the owner going to pay promptly or not? Even the reputation of the owner's Construction Supervisor is considered. Markup and contingencies are set and added to or, in bad markets, deducted from the estimate resulting in the bid price.

To put a fixed price on future construction work is always a gamble. Doing so in an area far away from home and for a different kind of work increases the risk. Since my years at Rapp AG in Basle I was aware of the two separate functions of calculating a fixed price: one is "estimating" and the



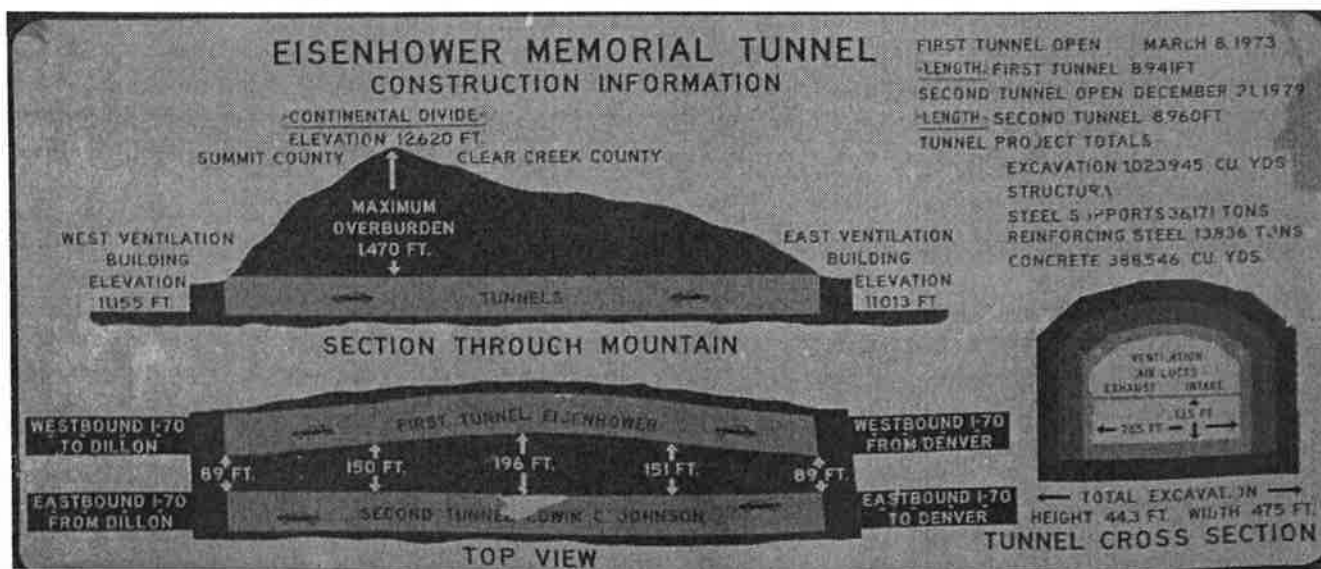
In our backyard in Bountiful, 1970

It was different for the Ray Dam. Kennecott was a frequent client of Gibbons & Reed's for decades. Now they needed help to get a fair price for this thin-arch double-curvature concrete dam in an area where contractors and suppliers routinely, in their opinion, got together to take the rich mining company for a ride.

I was sent to Kearny Arizona to let everyone know that our out-of-state company was bidding. The local clique did not take us seriously. Although we bid the work with a good markup and added a prudent contingency, we were awarded the job. In the private sector it is not common to publish bid results, so we could not know if we beat the competition or not. I obtained an Arizona PE license and laid out the rock blasting during the hottest weeks of that summer. After the concrete work was started I had to leave for Colorado but returned for infrequent inspections. It turned out to be a profitable job.

Eisenhower Tunnel Excavation is Stopped by Bad Ground

Excavation work on the top heading of the tunnel has run into trouble and stopped. Under about 1,500 feet of overburden, a zone of granitic gouge has squeezed the heavy shield, designed to overcome the two so-called Loveland Faults, to a standstill! The face of the tunnel sluffed progressively, threatening to form a chimney. As an emergency measure, a concrete wall has been placed to contain the face. I am involved in the G&R sponsored complete re-design under way in Salt Lake City. To make matters worse, Al Johnson Company has run into financial difficulties and is illiquid. State/ contractor relations have deteriorated to an endless finger-pointing game. Re-negotiations of the contract take place in Denver and Washington DC to avoid a default of the joint venture, while work is shut down for most of 1970. One condition of the re-negotiated cost-plus contract is a change in management from Al Johnson to Gibbons & Reed, and replacing most managers and engineers. Again it is not a friendly takeover.



Living in Idaho Springs Colorado, 1970 to 1973

Our group of a dozen key G&R employees, with Bill McLaughlin as Project Manager and me as Project Engineer, moves to Colorado and occupies the joint-venture offices and most key positions under adverse conditions. The re-design requires a multiple drift method to tunnel through the fault and a different concrete lining. Total steel requirement will ultimately rise from 16,000 tons to 42,000 tons and concrete volume will triple.

It takes a few weeks until the job is back on an even keel. We turn the home in Bountiful over to Gilberto and Doris and move to a small basement apartment in Idaho Springs. This is the peak of the "Hippy" era, the "Age of Aquarius"! Long haired, shabby looking young men and women live in communes, old school buses and abandoned mining camps up and down the valley. Even the school system in Idaho Springs is so "progressive" that teachers lie next to pupils on the shag carpet to help them learn how to read. Everything is anti-authoritarian and as un-structured as permissible. Discipline is a thing of the past and people over forty are the "squares" that do not fit in. Warren is in elementary school and Wayne in kindergarten.

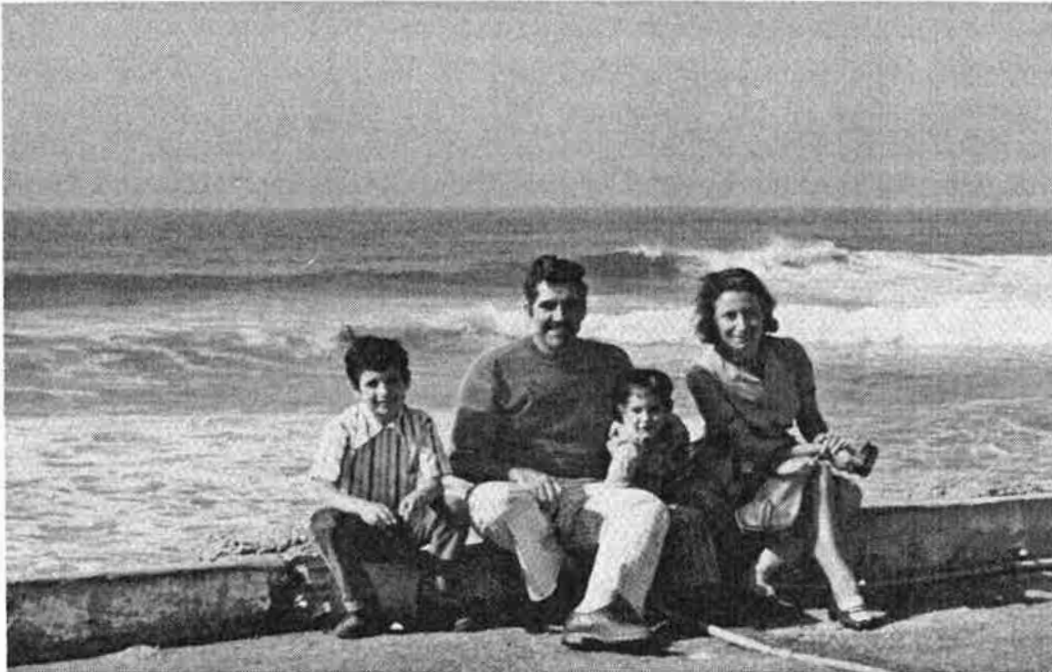
The 1,200 man workforce is a strange mix of old-time "tramp-miners" who always look for the job with the most hours per week and "hippies" who only want to work just enough to have grocery money for the next week. During work underground, every worker wears a 2-inch numbered brass tag on his hardhat, while a second identical tag is posted outside on a board. When leaving, he takes the tag off the board. This way anyone can see how many men are underground. I am always on the lookout for good drillers and make a mental note of his tag number when I observe one. Next day, seeing the same tag, the man is different. What is going on? A foreman tells me, it's the hippies, they split a job among two or three men. I am alarmed at the possible consequences in case of a dispute between these different men or in case of an accident. We need every good worker we can find and are not in a position to lose workers. So we just look the other way and hope for the best. To my surprise and relief, nothing adverse happens during the four years.

Romana thinks I work too much and, behind my back, enrolls me in oil-painting evening classes. To be ready, I buy acrylic paint, brushes, canvas and an easel. Then the intended instructor for the course, from New York City, gets sidetracked somewhere along the way and the class is cancelled. Rather than letting the painting stuff sit idle I start painting landscapes and other subjects on my own. On weekends we hike the hills and mountains around us and the boys turn into good hikers with interest in frogs, snakes, birds and other things young boys notice. Romana buys a pottery wheel and has taken up that hobby.

To keep the boys entertained during long winter nights we buy a model railroad set for Christmas. Nearby Denver is often our weekend shopping place, with Larimer Square or Cherry Creek the favored place for strolling and good eating. Georgetown has a well attended annual "Fasching" (German for Mardi Gras) and we celebrate it in 1971, 72 and 73. By March 8th 1973 the tunnel is ready to be opened for traffic. It has been renamed in 1972 by the Colorado Legislature to "Eisenhower Tunnel", because President Eisenhower was the main proponent of the US Interstate Highway system, and this tunnel is the crowning piece of I-70, its central transcontinental route. For the last year of construction I also acted as Project Manager and the governor invites me on opening day to ride in the lead car with him. Now the first bore is open for two-way traffic. A few years later a second bore is completed by another contractor so that there is only one-way traffic in each tunnel. I am asked by the State of Colorado to serve as a Disputes Review Board Member for that project.

Back Home in Bountiful, 1973

There are still many matters to be finished in Colorado, but there is another project near Auburn California that needs attention. I keep one company car at the airport in Denver and another in Sacramento, flying back and forth almost weekly, with weekend stops in Utah. For the summer of 1973 the family is back in our home in Bountiful. A three thousand Dollars bonus is spent to build a 30 ft by 15 ft swimming pool on the lot next door. Urs Berger helped me build a house over it so that it becomes an indoor pool. We use it from Wayne's birthday in March to Warren's birthday in November, then we shut it down for the winter.



On vacation in Pacifica California

Richard Nixon is elected President and he promises "US Energy Independence by 1980". Gas sells for 46 cents per gallon and a pipeline to Alaska is planned. There is also trouble in the Middle East again. A Canadian engineering firm that got to know me while I managed the Eisenhower Tunnel found out that I can read and write French. Their large project in northern Canada's Bay St. James requires French speaking engineers and they offer me a job for about twice the current pay. It is tempting but I decline because we want to stay at home now and not pull up stakes again so soon. Both boys attend St. Olaf's Catholic school and we are active in the parish. Our social life is in the parish, the Associated General Contractors and the Rotary Club. Every other year we have taken a three week vacation in Switzerland, so that our parents can enjoy their grandchildren and the sons will remain familiar with Swiss customs and the country.

In our basement we build a large HO-scale model railroad layout, with walls painted as background and scenery to depict the area around the Great Salt Lake. Warren and Wayne each have their own railroad stations and they help with detailing the miniature buildings according to their ability, and when it comes to detail work they are better than I am. Saturday mornings or

rainy summer days are spent down in the basement “working on the railroad” and listening to country music on the radio.

New Trends in the Construction Industry, 1975

In the past, most major heavy construction work was performed by large contracting firms using the family names of the founders and working with a union workforce. Over the years, work-rules and transfer restriction for key workers were made more onerous with each contract negotiation. “Featherbedding”, a rule requiring standby workers or unneeded “oilers” on heavy equipment, caused many companies to rethink their future. Then the five basic crafts of construction: Operators, Teamsters, Carpenters, Ironworkers and Laborers began to stagger the renewal date of their contracts to gain leverage. If each union would just take a six week strike but honor every other union’s picket lines, a whole season would be shut-down. No large company could risk that.

This was the straw that broke the camel’s back! One by one, old-time firms re-organized into holding companies with a union and a merit shop subsidiary. The union subsidiary kept the old family name and the merit shop or non-union took a fresh, generic name. Gibbons Company was the new holding company and all titles to equipment were in its name. Working subsidiaries were : Gibbons & Reed Company (heavy/highway union contracts), GR Contractors (sand and gravel union contracts) and Dexon Inc. (merit shop). Merit-shop is sometimes erroneously called “non-union” because the firms sign no union contracts and do not observe jurisdiction rules between different crafts. A truck driver can drive to the gravel-pit, use the loader to load his truck, drive to the fill and dump, then run the grader to spread and shape the fill. Many workers are union members who pay union dues directly out of their own pocket.

To make the different labor relations under the same holding company lawful, the subsidiaries have to deal with each other at “arms-length”. In effect : don’t talk to each other about labor matters and never transfer personnel back and forth. Every degree of separation is beneficial when defending against a union’s legal assault.

I was named President of the design-and-construct subsidiary Dexon Inc. We moved out of Gibbons & Reed’s office and yard into Davis County. Most importantly: we did not compete in the same lines of work as other subsidiaries. Paint scheme for the equipment was changed and the few people that joined the new entity were told that they could never transfer back. We were now on our own. About the same time, large private sector and semi-public clients began soliciting bids not only from union but also from merit shop firms.

During the next few years we designed and built many buildings and structures, a sand and salt storage building at the west portal of the Eisenhower Tunnel, tunnels and shafts at Red Fleet Dam near Vernal Utah, sewer sewage treatment plants, pre-stressed water tanks, pump stations and metal buildings. Warren and Wayne earned their first money cleaning offices and later helping with other age-appropriate chores on many of these projects.

Does Child's-Play Influence Career Choices?

A surplus drafting table with mechanical drafting arm from one of the many jobsites was too good to be thrown away when the job was completed. So I took it home and set it up in our basement. I only planned to use it to spread out large plans for study. That evening the boys waited for me to come home. They each had neatly drawn something important to them, maybe a tank or airplane, and were proud of their achievements. Of course I complimented them and this got them hooked. They drew all the time and quite well for their age. Maybe if I had not complimented them for their drawing skills they would have later chosen different careers. As it is, Warren chose to be a mechanical engineer and Wayne an architect.

Three-Alarm Fire in Northern Idaho, 1971

It is the end of a hot summer in Northern Idaho's Palouse Country, a fertile plain. Wheat, barley, rye, hops and other grains are ready for the harvest. The large, old, wooden seed grain storage facility in Nezperce has been cleaned out and is ready to receive the new seed crop when a nighttime fire on a Thursday night burns it to the ground. Only the concrete foundations remain. My friend Henry Man asks me on Friday morning to call the owner of the seed company and I drive up there the same day, meeting him in the evening.

The re-design and re-building has to be done "by next month if not sooner"! We visit the county commissioner on Saturday and are given permission to start building at once while their inspectors look over the plans, provided we use the old foundation and merely re-build what was burned. To re-build with wood is out of the question, it has to be metal and quick. Monday a metal building supplier is shipping a long list of girders, beams and corrugated sheet metal, even before the drawings are made or the calculations done. Our crew is on its way with all the necessary equipment and ready to unload the shipment as it arrives. It is a four-story building of square silos charged through its roof. The owner tells us which type of seed will arrive first, and that silo is ready two weeks after the fire, followed by other silos about one week apart until the whole facility is completed. Not a single truckload of seed had to be turned away. A month later we receive the building permit.

Disputes Resolution Boards (DRB) in the Construction Industry

Over the past decade, construction litigation has increased to the point where almost a third of all major public works contracts end up in the courts. Major projects are shut down because of irreconcilable disputes. To shut a project down is any contractor's last resort. Bonding companies will not pick up the pieces unless a court orders them to do so. The agency sometimes tries to re-advertise for bids, but the competition is not eager to finish an abandoned, troubled jobsite. To avoid or minimize the risk of shut-down, arbitration or litigation, a contract clause of the second bore of Eisenhower Tunnel required a new kind of disputes resolution. A three-member board is formed as soon as the contract is signed with one neutral expert each appointed by contractor and owner. The two then select a third who becomes the chairman of the board. The board visits the jobsite and attends meetings every month or less frequently depending upon the size of the contract. Each party can ask the board for a consultative opinion on contract disputes and, when the parties are deadlocked, a written, formal, binding ruling. In most cases such a ruling can be obtained within a week. Then work must continue and an appeal to the court is unlikely. I served on this first Disputes Resolution Board (DRB) as the State of Colorado's appointed member. Since

then, the DRB clause has become standard on most Civil projects and I have served on more than two dozen boards as member or chairman.

Visiting England and Normandy Again, 1981

Last year I had flown home just in time to see my father before he died at home of old age. He was 94 and even one week earlier could still walk slowly around the block as he had done for years. It was a quick emergency trip.

With Warren now seventeen and Wayne twelve, their interests are changing away from the model railroad into models of airplanes and dioramas of combat scenes with tanks and fortifications. For this year's vacation we fly to London to sightsee in southern England and then cross the Channel to France. Along the Normandy coast are many World War Two bunkers and long range gun emplacements. We visit as many as possible and Warren makes sketches of some. By rental car we drive past Paris and stay overnight in Fontainebleau. As we reach the Swiss border, we find that the "United Europe" seems to have done away with border checkpoints because there is no guard on duty on either side, or maybe they are on dinner break, because we drive across the border without even stopping.

An acquaintance of ours is a high ranking officer in the Swiss Army and he arranges for us to visit the training base for armored troops. To my surprise, he allows me and the boys to sit in the turret of a tank as he runs it over a five mile training track, up and down steep grades, through water and other obstacles. No doubt a highlight for the boys and another impulse to model more tanks and other military stuff. Warren has his sights set on an air force career and only changes his mind later when he finds out that 20-20 eyesight is required of pilots and he has less.

New Church and Social Hall for St. Olaf's Parish, 1978 to 1983

St. Olaf's Catholic Parish was established in 1943. A school was built in 1959 and a chapel in 1963. Sunday masses for the 400 families were held in two adjacent classrooms of the school building. In January of 1978 father Thomas L. McNamara convened a parish meeting to discuss the need for expanding the portion of the school used as church for the previous 18 years. The consensus of the parishioners was that the time had come to build a permanent church. A committee was formed to explore the possibility and I was elected as its chairman. Among the members was Bob Brotherton, a parishioner and architect.

The committee arrived at a general plan : a modern church to seat 550 people and an adjacent parish hall of about the same size. It was agreed that this could only be realized if we came up with an extremely frugal design and then spread out the completion by volunteers over several years. My experience with metal buildings told me that there is no less expensive building system than standard prefabricated metal buildings. These are produced by the thousands and serve mostly as barns, shops, storage buildings or airplane hangars and,



unfortunately, look bland. Our architect found a way to make the 20,000 square feet church and hall building look good despite its prefabricated steel skeleton. The City of Bountiful granted a waiver, allowing us initially to build just the shell, and later come back to obtain separate building permits for the interior work of the church and later the hall.

Parishioners approved the plan and pledged their financial and volunteer support in early 1979. Four building contractors took out plans and specifications to prepare bids for the raw shell without any electrical, mechanical, or interior work but only two of them delivered bids to the committee. Tension was high as I opened the first bid because we all knew our financial limitations. Total lump sum price was 199,000 Dollars. One committee member started laughing out loud: "does this guy think he is selling shoes?" Back to business, I opened the other bid and read its price: 200,000 Dollars. So the "shoe seller" won the contract. Ground was broken on July 8th 1979, the shell was closed in within about 3 months and contract work including an access road was completed in April 1980.

Volunteers and unpaid skilled workers started working immediately most evenings and all Saturdays. Electrical, mechanical, sheetrock, ceiling, floor covering and painting was not yet finished as used second hand pews were sanded and re-stained, an activity both our boys and Romana participated in. The church was dedicated on July 29th 1980, the 950th anniversary of St. Olaf's martyrdom. The social center was not finished until October 1983. Our five-year effort had finally come to a successful end.

Leaving Gibbons & Reed Company After 21 Years, 1982

There is another strategic change in the company, concentrating on the least risky activities like: gravel-pits, ready mixed concrete and local heavy highway projects. It is not my line, and to just spend the rest of my career in some administrative position is not appealing. An international design and engineering company offers me a high-paid position in – of all places – Pakistan. The Tarbela Dam, where Swissboring did exploratory drilling and grout curtain injection three decades ago, was going to be enlarged and a new spillway built. They invite me and Romana to travel to New York to their main office and talk about qualifications and living conditions. We learn that we would have to leave the boys in the US, or send them to a private school in the hill stations of Pakistan while we would be living near the project as a couple only. Had I known this before, I would have rejected their offer with a phone call. They could have saved the expense of our interview. We are not going to dismantle our family for money.

I incorporate my own firm "Ruemmele Engineering Company" as my employer of last resort doing occasional consulting or DRB work. After two weeks on unemployment insurance at \$ 166 per week I start work as Chief Engineer for a local building contractor intending to broaden its scope into civil work.

Warren has bought an abandoned Mustang car and spends all his earnings restoring it. As we pull the inside door-panel off, we notice the inspector's stamp: Nov. 11th 64, his birthday ! That model was so hot that they worked , probably at double time, on Veterans Day 1964. Wayne is working at the local bicycle shop, assembling bicycles.

This year my mother died and now I have only cousins and friends alive in Switzerland. Romana still has her mother and two sisters over there and another sister in Italy. Our roots in

Europe are getting thinner every year. We still sometimes refer to Switzerland as "home" but I wonder why. Maybe because we speak Swiss to each other and we sing in the Swiss Chorus Edelweiss of Salt Lake City.

Pumping the Great Salt Lake into the Desert, 1986 to 1987

The Great Salt Lake lies in a closed basin without any river leaving it. Inflow from the surrounding mountains and evaporation go through weather cycles. A wet cycle from 1963 to 1986 caused the lake level to rise 21 feet cresting at elevation 4212 feet. The high lake level flooded Interstate Highway I-80 near Grantsville where transcontinental traffic was detoured through town. It also threatened flooding of the Salt Lake International airport.

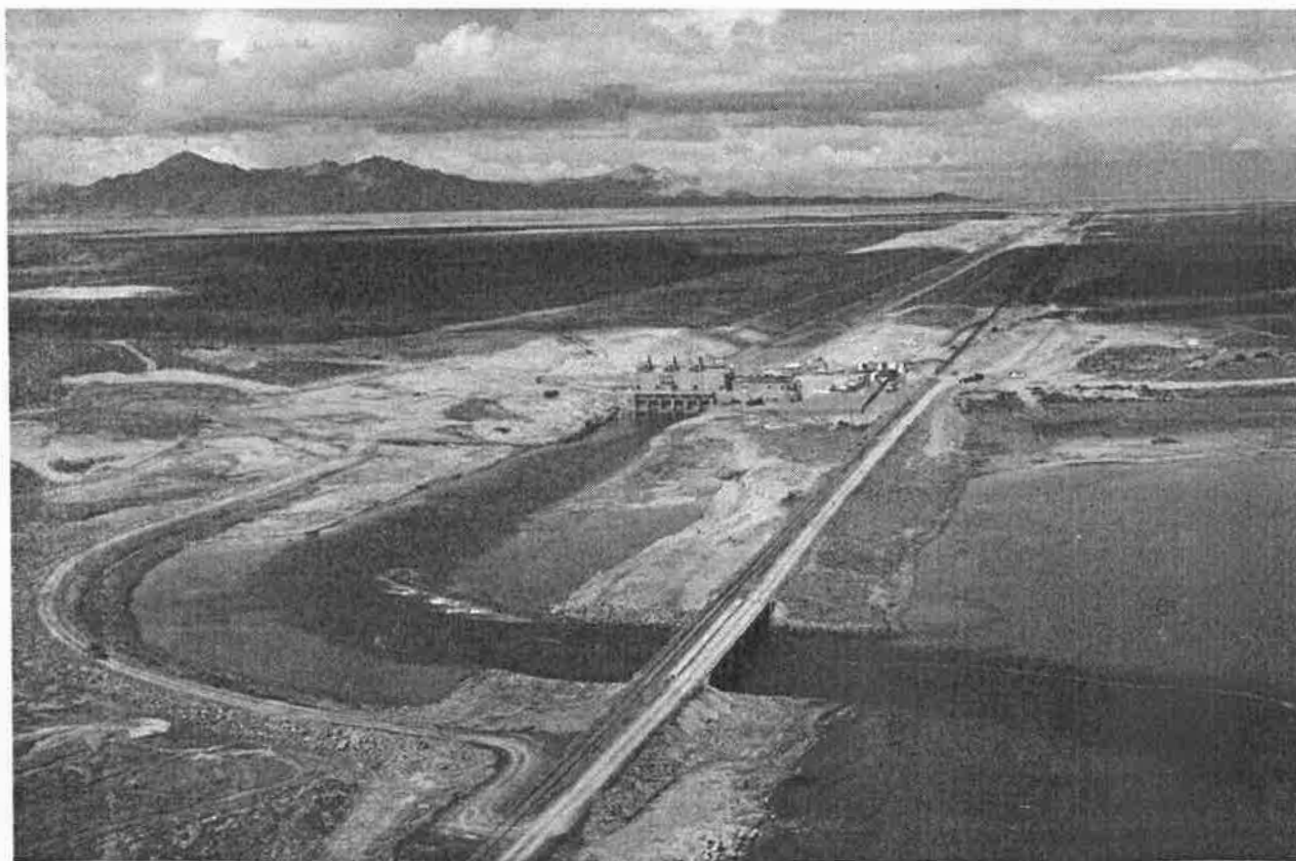


A three-day storm with high waves from June 5th through the 7th 1986 washed out Southern Pacific Railroad's dike crossing the Great Salt Lake. Along the south shore, Union Pacific Railroad was also in danger. Under these emergency conditions the Utah Legislature

decided to take action without waiting for federal help. Two contracts are negotiated without public bidding: one to raise 27 miles of dike and restore SP railroad traffic to Ogden, the other to increase evaporation surface by pumping lake water into the barren western desert between Lakeside and Wendover. The earthmoving contractor is Robert L. Helms of Reno Nevada and its subsidiary "Lost Dutchman Company". Both companies hire me as Project Manager and Project Engineer. We "hit the ground running"!

Less than two weeks after the disastrous storm, a one-hundred-man merit-shop workforce with a huge fleet of equipment, most of it shipped directly from the Caterpillar factory in Peoria Illinois, is working around the clock out of two camps in Hogup and Lakeside. By August 6th the most critical five mile dike between the two camps is complete and ready for rail and road traffic. Six work trains run day and night including Saturdays and Sundays hauling shot rock in both directions to raise the dike grade by three feet.

At the same time, a deep, wide channel across the Hogup ridge and a pump station pit is excavated. During the following winter season we lose a few working days to inclement weather but keep it to the barest minimum. Warren works as a boatman ferrying crews from Lakeside to Hogup and making good money during his summer break from the University of Utah. When the day is done, his clothing is stiff with salt from the spray. Our hours are not a cushy 9 to 5 but rather five-to nine! The pump station proper, with three 11-foot diameter pumps is built by another contractor in 1987. My work is done in late 1987 and I find no suitable work in Utah right away.



The Collector Car Bug Bites Us All !

Warren had started this trend with his 1964 Mustang collector car. It was not really a “hot-rod”, but his next one, a Shelby Tiger deserved that name. It is a small, British two-seater “Alpine” modified by Carol Shelby to have a Ford V8 engine and power train. He spends all his hard earned money on these cars. I buy a regular “Alpine” of the same vintage as a parts car for him. Then Wayne buys a VW Beetle and dolls it up with pink paint and a low slung exhaust system, so low that he scrapes asphalt on some street dips. Now we all have a bottomless money pit. It is the “craze of the age” and the sons still own their collector cars twenty five years later.



Subway Tunnels for Los Angeles, 1987 to 1988

While wrapping up paperwork of the West Desert Project in Lakeside, Mike Shank calls me from Los Angeles. He remembers me from two years ago when I was chairman of a DRB for one of his tunnels near Glenwood Springs. The board ruling at that time was quite adverse for him, and I really expected to be forever on his do-not-call list. Because I have a California Professional Engineers license, he offers me a job as Chief Engineer for four miles of subway tunnels from McArthur Park to Pershing Square in Los Angeles just awarded to the joint-venture “Shank-Obayashi”. Rather than being unemployed in Salt Lake City I go to work in Los Angeles.



I rent an apartment near McArthur Park and can walk to the office off Wilshire Boulevard in tennis shoes while early morning television reports snow and ice in Salt Lake City. The work requires long hours and often Saturday overtime. I trade the old diesel Mercedes with 240,000 miles for a flashy, yellow Buick Wildcat convertible. It fits into the LA scene and I spend many weekends on car shows because leaving or returning to the city would require hours of bumper to bumper traffic in any direction.



Romana shuttles to LA and back about every two weeks, because Warren is still studying mechanical engineering at the U of U and Wayne is in his senior year at Judge Memorial High School. During the summer break, Warren comes to work for us as a surveyor on the night shift. After less than two years the work is approaching its end. Rather than traveling with the joint venture to the East Coast, I look for and find work closer to home.

Jordanelle Dam Near Park City Utah, 1989 to 1991

Granite Construction Company had bought Gibbons & Reed some years ago. Bidders for the Jordanelle Dam are not allowed to subcontract tunnel and shaft work, but must perform it with its own workers. Some years ago, Granite had a severe accident with multiple fatalities on a tunnel and shaft project in the Sierra Nevada. It caused them to give up underground work for many years and left them without experienced supervisors. I am hired as tunnel engineer for two drill-and-blast tunnels, a large underground chamber and three shafts. In their mind I am the designated lightning-rod should anything go seriously wrong. Experience reduces risk but cannot eliminate it. Fortunately we have no accidents except for minor cuts and abrasions. Needless to say: ten hour workdays and many Saturdays are again the rule, not the exception.

The commute from Bountiful is about 90 Minutes each way. It is good to live at home with Romana and Wayne who is now at the U of U studying architecture. Warren has left for Texas A&M University where he works on his Masters Degree in mechanical engineering. Work progresses well and in March 1991 I am replaced by a less expensive young engineer because the high-risk phase is behind us. The lightning rod is no longer needed.



Sixth Water Tunnel Access Road, 1991 to 1992

An access road has to be blasted into the steep walls of Sixth Water Canyon high above the Spanish Fork River. Greenway Construction of Helena Montana hires me to take over as manager and engineer. It is a minority company and most of the work is subcontracted to Clyde Company of Springville. I live in a travel trailer on the jobsite at about 6,000 feet elevation, but rent a student apartment from BYU for the winter months. The high altitude scenery is beautiful and the work not very demanding. I enjoy the mountains, can be home for the weekends and working hours are merely forty per week. What a change from other jobs.

We walk with a group from St. Olaf's in the Patrick's Day parade and enjoy the weekends together. I always hate to leave Sunday evening because it ought to be my own time, but to reach the jobsite Monday morning early leaves me no other choice. Before midyear of the second season, paving is complete and I am looking for work again. I have several irons in the fire in California, but nothing definite yet.

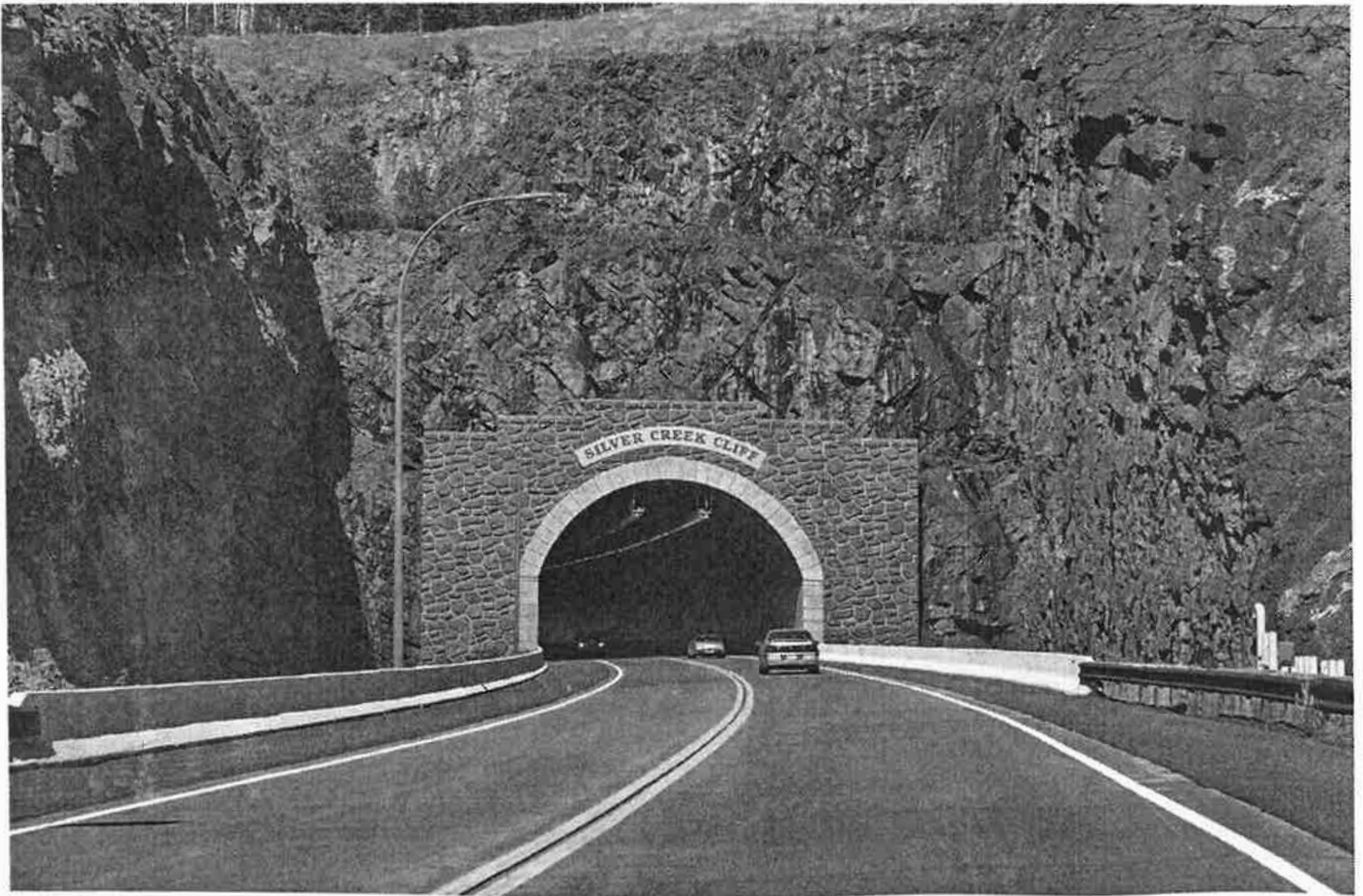


Silver Cliff Tunnel on Lake Superior's Shore, 1992 to 1993

Frontier- Kemper / Traylor Bros. need a project engineer who can obtain a Minnesota PE license. They know me well from several previous estimating assignments for tunnels on the West Coast and the Chicago area. I have always preferred engineering to management and the offer comes just at the right time. Without much hesitation I accept the position. While I fill out applications for the Minnesota license, another offer for work in LA arrives. I do not regret having accepted F-K's offer, because I know LA and am not all that enthused about another few years

there. I transfer from Greenway to Frontier-Kemper and get ready for the trip to Duluth. My career seems nothing but a string of circumstances and coincidences.

I join the Rotary Club in Duluth and help start a Rotary Club in Two Harbors. A railroad runs along the shore from Duluth to Two Harbors, mostly as a tourist attraction. The town's two cafes are sort of partisan, one for Democrats that opens for breakfast at six and the other for Republicans that opens at seven every morning. It does not matter to me, because I often eat in my travel trailer, but when I go out for breakfast I either eat with the town's Democrats or be late for work. From July to September I live in my travel trailer in the public campground. Then Wayne leaves home to move in with his fiancée Jenny Kyser closer to the U of U, and Romana locks up the house for the winter and drives to Minnesota with her constant companion Nero, our Labrador dog.



Part Seven

We are now "Empty Nesters"

Minnesota can be called "the Scandinavia" of the US. Its first non-Indian visitors were French trappers called "Voyageurs" who came through Quebec Canada. Later settled by Swedes, Finns and Norwegians among others, we feel a difference in folklore and their way of life. Among them is the habit to enter a house through the back door and take the boots off in the mudroom. Another is their way of speech, almost with a Canadian accent. Winter on the North Shore of Lake Superior may start in October and end in May. It is so cold that one hears ice crystals tingling in the frozen trees, and after the famous "Gales of November" an ice cover thick enough to drive trucks on it covers the shoreline.

I am lucky to find a summer house for rent, just a stone's throw from the rocky shore and only two miles from the tunnel. Like most houses it has two separate sources of heat, a propane hot air system and a large fireplace. If both heaters should fail during winter, we would have to drive to a motel right away and stay there until the heating system works again. Minnesota has a law that obligates anyone to render assistance during winter to stranded travelers on rural roads after sunset.

The High School band plays at the bandstand in the middle of town every Friday evening before a cheerful and freely applauding crowd. Our Catholic parish and several Protestant churches keep up an active social life throughout the year. There are of course also the traditional Masonic lodge, "Odd Fellows" lodge and American Legion hall and Elks Club like in most small towns. And now we have a brand new Rotary Club within a district that straddles the Canadian border. We are footloose and fancy free again, like before we had the boys, taking weekend trips and go to social event in nearby Duluth as we please.

In December a movie company comes to town and asks for extras to play in the film "Iron Will", a story about a young man winning a sled dog race in the early 1900's. Romana signs up and must find era-appropriate clothing to be acceptable. No rubber boots, modern coats or anything with zippers or plastic. The filming takes place at the old railroad station in the coldest time of the year. Months later we see the film but cannot spot her among the crowd.

On March 23rd we hole-thru. Concrete lining of the tunnel progresses well right through the spring. To keep the tunnel from freezing we spend 125,000 Dollars just for propane fuel. In May Romana drives back to Bountiful where lawn and yard could not survive the summer without watering. In August I fly home to be present at Wayne and Jenny's wedding, then I return to wrap up my work.

My First Attempt at Retirement, 1994

There is already night frost as I leave the North Shore in late October 1993. On the long drive home, I add up the years that work has not allowed me to live at home. We built the house in Bountiful 36 years ago but I lived somewhere else for 15 of those years and this should now change for the better. I am too young for rocking chair and daytime television, but too old for months of living in crummy motel rooms with kitchenette, eating my own cooking. I transfer back

to the Bountiful Rotary Club, join the Swiss Chorus Edelweiss and am active in St. Olaf's Catholic church and parish again. Part of our basement is now my office, complete with computer and drafting table. I have several consulting clients and serve on Disputes Resolution Boards in Colorado, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Idaho and Texas, but am retired between these jobs.

House Sitting in Maui Hawaii

A friend of ours calls us unexpectedly from Maui. His next door neighbor must leave for a month on the mainland, but does not want the house to be unoccupied. "You can live in it free for a month"! We call Romana's sister Silvana in Switzerland and decide on the spur of the moment to do the house-sitting together. As the four of us meet at the airport in Maui, we are surprised to also find their son Michael there. He invited himself to the vacation. It was a great vacation with trips by rental car to all the different beaches and parks, including the secluded town of Hana accessible only over a narrow road with 360 sharp curves! We leave the house a lot cleaner than it was before.

A Six Thousand Mile Round Trip

Wayne and Jenny move to Cleveland where she continues her studies while he works for an architectural firm. I am estimating a tunnel job outside of Chicago and we drive there pulling our 36 feet fifth-wheel trailer full of furniture for them. Yvonne joins us in Chicago and we drive on to Cleveland. After unloading the furniture we head south to New Orleans and then on to Houston to visit Warren and Kelly. The trailer is parked in Highland Texas outside the city. During the night a heavy downpour turns the campground into a swamp, the roof leaks and there is widespread flooding all around Houston. I have to fly to San Francisco to estimate another tunnel job for Traylor Brothers while Romana and Yvonne stay in a motel in Galveston. It is still raining a week later as I return. Many underpasses on the Interstate are flooded and not passable. Fortunately for us, Highland means "high land" and is less flooded than other areas. We make it out of Houston just in time to hear on the radio that the flooded Interstate behind us is closed to all traffic.

Exploring British Columbia and Alaska

With truck and camper we head north to Canada and to the southernmost tip of Alaska. The cities of Steward and Hyder are at the end of a long fjord. Warm air from the Pacific keeps both ports ice-free through most winters. Hyder is a town dating back to Russian rule, with a historic orthodox church and other historic artifacts. Leaving the camper behind, we head further north past Hyder to see unpopulated mountain ranges and more glaciers than all alpine glaciers put together. Long abandoned mining camps turn into ghost towns, their wooden bunkhouses rotting away under collapsed roofs. When US law enforcement occasionally shows up in Hyder, fugitives from justice flee into the hills and hide out until the coast is clear again.

We want to see more of the fjord and hire a man with a motorboat for a daytrip. The three of us cruise down toward the ocean, have lunch on board and return at dusk. Boat tours are only his time-off activity. His real work is mining. Rotating every two weeks, crews are flown by helicopter up to an inaccessible copper mine in the mountains where they work around the clock. The ore is hauled to a harbor and shipped to Korea, China or Japan because smelter-smoke is not allowed in Canada.

Swiss "Gospel Family" Gives Concerts in Utah, 1995

One of Romana's childhood friends sings with a Swiss group of gospel singers. They sing exclusively in English and in the style of "Negro Spirituals". One thing leads to another and we find ourselves hosting the 50 member group for a concert tour in Davis County Utah. Most members are in their 30's or 40's and they wear regular street clothes, the soloists a bit fancier. Some can be placed with host families in the Bountiful area and others lodge in a local motel. They have an instrumental group and bring all instruments with them, except of course, the grand piano we must rent.

One well attended concert is in the St. Olaf's church, another in Salt Lake City and the last in Layton. As it is close to the first of August, our Swiss National Day dating back to the year 1291, we invite them all to come to the traditional picnic party of the Swiss Chorus Edelweiss in Sugarhouse Park. What a contrast: our older group of Swiss-Americans singing in Swiss German, and the younger visitors singing in English.

Our Own Cabin in Big Cottonwood Canyon, 1997

While there is a bubble in electronics and dot-com companies I accumulate many shares in that sector through splits. Our investment advisor is shocked when I tell him to sell all one thousand shares of Level3 Communications for \$ 115 each. He advises me to sleep over it and call him in the morning again which I do.

I sold too soon. The shares keep rising to about \$ 125 each. With some of the proceeds we buy a small A-frame cabin surrounded by tall pines in Big Cottonwood Canyon. It is strictly a spring to fall cabin because the home owners association must shut down the water line each winter or it will freeze. We enjoy the fresh air in summer and are only sorry we could not buy it when the boys were small and with us at home. After the dot-com crash, Level3 Communications shares are worth less than five Dollars each.



In November, Warren married Kelly Snyder in Houston Texas. We all traveled there from Bountiful, McCall, even Switzerland and Italy. It was a memorable occasion for all.

"It may be someday I'll come back to Ireland....." 2000

That's how the song of Galway Bay starts. This year we visit Ireland instead of Switzerland or Hawaii. Our Swiss friends, the Schweglers, join us in Shannon and we drive in a rental van, on the "wrong" side of the road, around the Atlantic Counties. For me it is a "sentimental journey" bringing back memories of my trip on horseback. Outside of Lisdoonvarna

is a hot spring, and above it was the "Spa View" hotel where I had such a good time fifty years ago. The name has changed but, thanks to an old photo, we find the place again. The present owner recognizes his grandfather on the picture and the little girl on the pony is his aunt. My friend from the boys-scout years, Rene Kueng, is a sculptor. Has the "Galway Bay" song inspired him? Some years ago he travelled to the hills south of Galway and chiseled an Irish Harp out of the native rock. He left it in a farmer's field and we found it in front of his house.

Navajo Water and Sanitation Project, 1997 to 2002

The Bountiful Rotary Club has its late summer party and the spouses are invited. As most years we discuss upcoming donations, volunteer projects and scholarships. A one-time donation of a thousand Dollars to a housing project in Tanzania is proposed by the board. I look at Romana and we grin. The president noticed and calls on me to comment for the benefit of all. I tell them sarcastically : "this may be part down payment for a new Mercedes of a local klept-o-crat". Well, very funny. Then he asks what we would like to do instead. After a little thought Romana gets up and says : "water for an Indian Reservation". Most members have no idea of conditions on Indian Reservations in the Southwest. " Don't they have water ?" they ask. We explain that many have neither flowing water nor a septic tank nor electricity. Instead they must buy water at the nearest gas station, often fifty miles away, and haul it in barrels to their hogan or tiny home. So I am appointed the unpaid volunteer for this Rotary project.

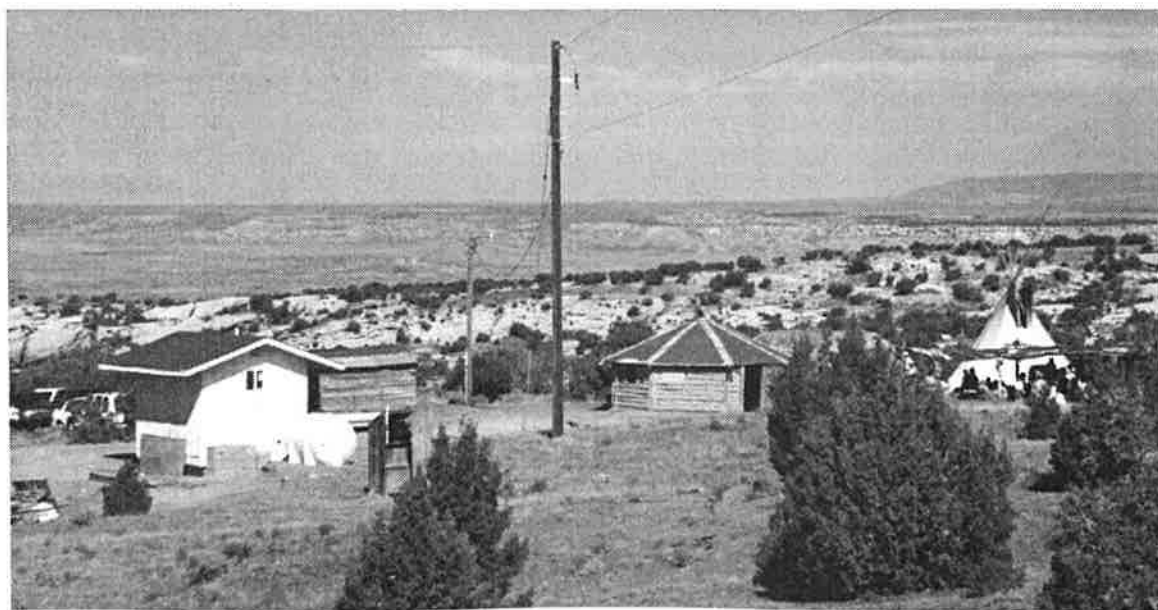
A first meeting is held August 21st 1998 at the office of the State of Utah, Division of Community and Economic Development with several officials and four members of the Bountiful Rotary Club. Aneth Chapter President Lee Leonard confirmed that drinking water and sanitation for Alkali Wash and McCracken Mesa was the chapter's priority. We drive to the mesa and meet with Willis Nakai, a mesa resident who volunteers to help with the work. I assure him that we want no publicity or public acknowledgement, offer free design and construction assistance and all materials if the homeowners or other Navajo volunteers do the physical work.

In Shiprock New Mexico I learn details from the US Indian Health Service (IHS) about a two million Dollars Federal grant to supply water and sanitation to sixty homes between Bluff and Hatch Trading Post, Utah. A deep well, pump station and seven miles of pipeline were built 1996 to serve eight families in Alkali Wash. Now the work is stopped because three of those eight families do not have the means to build a bathroom and hook up to the line. It is an administrative impasse while fifty families on the high mesa are waiting. IHS office gives me two conditions to get the project back on track. First: help those three families in Alkali Wash with kitchen and bathroom lean-to's, septic tank installation and then hook them up to the existing pipeline. Second: make half the dwellings on the mesa ready for water and sanitation by building bathrooms and septic tanks, then install sinks, bathtubs and flush toilets. Once this is done they will build a planned booster pump station at the end of the wash, lay the remaining seventeen miles of mainline on the mesa, and erect a 50,000 gallon water tank at the far end of the system. On the mesa are some mobile homes with built-in kitchens and bathrooms, but we still must build lean-to's for about 20 homes to comply with the conditions, and then another 20 while IHS constructs booster pump station, mainline and water tank.

Back in Bountiful I inform the Rotary Club of the scheme and the conditions. Membership agrees with only one abstention and we are off and running. Running may be a bit exaggerated. It is more like trying to run in knee-deep mud. On every one of over two dozen 800-mile round trips

my pickup truck is filled with collected fixtures. Plumbing suppliers donate bathtubs, toilets, wash basins and kitchen sinks that are of the last decade's fashion color like "avocado", "copper-tone" or "turquoise". My design for an 8' x 12' lean-to annex one step lower than the home's floor level is approved by the tribal authorities. An existing window will usually be made into a door and the annex has two new windows and an outside door. The kitchen sink will be in the existing home but bathtub, washbasin and water heater are in the annex. The club rents a storage unit in Blanding and obtains credit from the local lumber store. We want only enough lumber, pipe or appliances on a jobsite for a day's work to reduce the temptation for pilferage or vandalism.

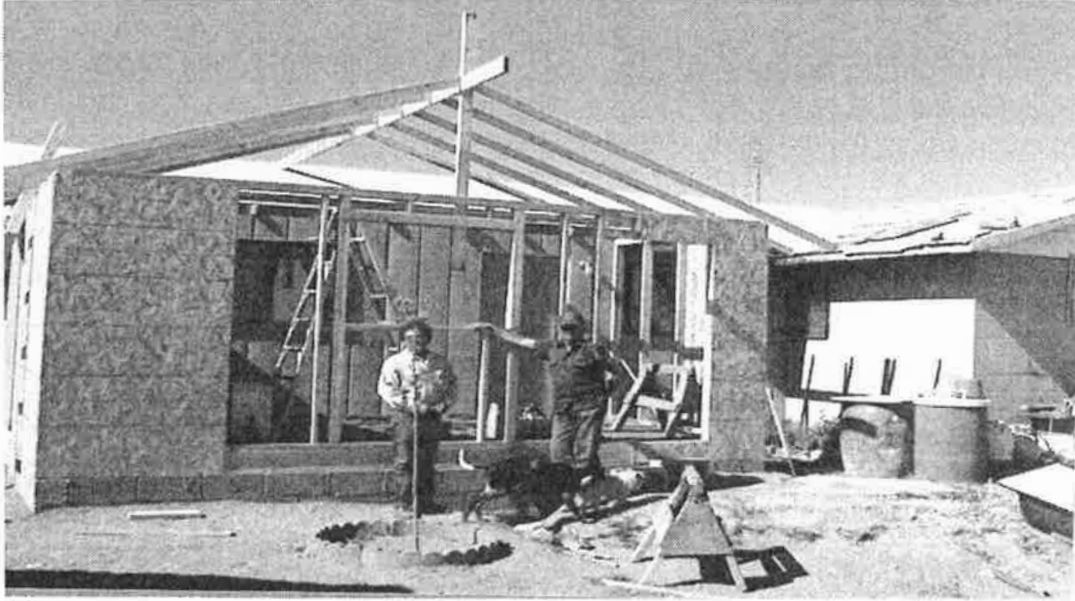
During October 2000, while Romana is on vacation in Switzerland, Willis Nakai and a worker from the Aneth Chapter help me build the first bathroom annex down in Alkalai Wash for a family with five children. I stay in a cheap motel in Blanding and drive to Montezuma Creek early each morning to give the chapter worker a ride to the jobsite. He talks very little English but we can converse enough. Once he asks me if I am also Indian, maybe from another tribe. After work I drive him back to his home and then, passing by the jobsite, head back to Blanding in the dark. On the way I always notice a few trucks parked around our jobsite and men "inspecting" what was done that day. Next morning the wife tells us that all these idle neighbors just came to snoop around and make snide remarks like "hey, what's so difficult here, we could do that just as good if not better and faster"! Of course that is the true purpose of our exercise.



Willis Nakai's Summer School

Working long hours each day with shovels, concrete blocks, hammers and lumber we have the first lean-to ready for roofing in a week. Over the weekend the husband of the family who works as a carpenter in Colorado comes home with three of his Colorado buddies. They complete roofing and the rest of the work. The following week we lay out the foundation for several other bathrooms and dig laterals to the mainline for connection and pits for septic tanks with a backhoe. Work progresses slowly but the following year the first condition is met, and all seven miles of the Alkali Wash system with eight connections are pressure tested again, chlorinated, drained, filled with clean drinking water and taken into operation. Outhouses are a thing of the past and are burned, their pits filled in with soil.

I knew that without electricity all water heaters would have to be propane fueled, but hesitated to make a decision. On one of my trips I noticed a crew of linemen from the Navajo Electric Utility setting power poles and stringing wire. I learn that a pole with transformer will soon be in front of every home on the mesa, so owners can connect their inside wiring. It solves the water heater problem but adds inside wiring and fixtures to our scope of work. Rotary funds are augmented by grants from the Eccles Foundation, Rotary International and other contributors. Now we also receive a substantial grant from the Utah Navajo Trust Fund to finish the project.



A bathroom annex under construction

Up on the mesa, progress is slow but steady and in spring of 2001 I report to the IHS that the second condition is met and it is their turn now to complete the project. "Not so fast" they say. Only Navajo-owned companies can do public works under the grant, and this coming season no company has time for this project. Maybe next season? I am not happy and ask if there is anything they can think of to keep their promise to the McCracken families. The head of the IHS office has a solution : a contractor could erect the 50,000 gallon water tank at the end of the line, but not lay the line to it, leaving the tank high and dry for a year. People on the mesa took this as a "sign of good faith" together with the assurance that next year the line will be laid. And so it happened that all sixty families in the wash and on the mesa now have electric power, drinking water and modern sanitation since the fall of 2002.

Winter Olympics, 2002

Olympic Committee Members voted to award the Winter Olympic Games of 2002 to Salt Lake City. Some members demanded and received bribes from applicants before the vote. It was a corrupt but well known practice. A reform movement within the Olympic Community called it a scandal and later ousted the Committee President. This Spanish aristocrat insisted to be called "His Excellency", maybe for his excellent corruption. New management of the SLC Committee is installed and the scandal-taint removed.

A delegation of the Swiss Olympic Committee including Federal Councilor Ogi comes here to plan their venues and facilities. The Swiss consul in San Francisco invites us to meet with them and help with advice. Of course we recognize that Utah's liquor laws are unusual in most European eyes, but I am quite concerned when I learn that the hospitality chief wants to bootleg cheaper liquor from neighboring states by rental truck into Utah. That is not enough, with mad-cow disease raging in Europe, they want airline hostesses to smuggle meat for their Swiss House restaurant. "Don't worry, we did that in Japan and nobody caught us"! By e-mail to the Swiss Committee Chairman I am able to restore some respect for US and Utah law.

When the call for unpaid volunteers goes out 50,000 apply but only 20,000 are required. Romana applies and is accepted, probably because she is fluent in German, French and Italian, all three important alpine winter sports languages. She is assigned to the Snowbasin venture where downhill and giant slalom competition takes place. I install a second telephone line for Swiss athletes and their supporters to call if they need help 24 hours a day.

In November before the big event a Swiss TV team "Cash TV" visits. They want to interview local Swiss-Americans for broadcast in Switzerland during the games. We give them a list of names and they pick three women and three men. I take them duck hunting in the wetlands and show them open range buffalo on Antelope Island. When Romana's mother sees me on Swiss TV shooting down a flying duck she is surprised. She did not know I am a duck-killer.

Utah's Mitt Romney and the volunteers organize the hospitality and logistics of the games perfectly. Romana drives to a local assembly point early each morning. Then the Snowbasin group rides the bus to the mountain where they work in large tents. She is in the "celebrity" tent and uses all her languages a lot. It is dark when she returns. My emergency phone never rings and that is a good sign for the fine organization of the games.

Three Tunnels Under Temple Square, 2004 to 2007

For many years I knew Gary Brierley, his Denver company and some of his associates. Now he gives me a contract to act as project engineer for a utility tunnel under Temple Square. The contractor, Dynatec Mining Services, has one of those rare crews who still know how to hand-mine through wet gravel and sand, securing the ground with spiling or liner plates one foot at a time. It is an extremely slow process and the only access to the portal is an old freight elevator.

Next in line is a short two-story tunnel under North Temple connecting two basements on opposite sides of the street, followed by a two-lane vehicular tunnel from one underground parking garage to another, with streetcar tracks above it. I usually get up at 4:30 AM and, after a leisurely breakfast, arrive on the jobsite before six in the morning. Being semi-retired, I can quit early and be home in Bountiful for lunch and a nap. So, this is the first "cushy job" of my career!

Golden Wedding Anniversary, 2007

"Time flies when you are having fun!" Indeed, it is hard to believe that we were married fifty years ago. The sons married and moved away, Warren to Texas and Wayne to Idaho. We have four happy grandchildren and another on the way. To celebrate our golden wedding anniversary, we invite our friends and Romana's sisters to a restaurant in Langenbrugg,

Switzerland. Most of them were also at our wedding in 1956. Cherry trees are in bloom, the rolling hills of the Jura are green and cowbells are heard in the distance.

It is good to be retired and in good health. We walk almost an hour every day and travel when we feel like it. The model railroad is still “under construction” and from time to time I have a cost estimate or other consulting job. I must keep up with the latest developments in heavy construction in case there is another job in the future. Our social life is still mostly in the Catholic parish, the Rotary Club and the Swiss Chorus Edelweiss.

Working from Time to Time as a “Graybeard” Consultant, 2009

I am not actively looking for work, but still enjoy doing an occasional job as a consultant, estimator or expert witness for the companies that I worked for years ago. When a company bids a large project, they may need a team of ten people for just a few weeks. It is not feasible to employ spare estimators “just in case” something comes up for bid. So, the retirees are like a strategic reserve that can be turned on and off like a spigot. For my part, I enjoy still being active in the construction business and use my experience. The rocking chair can wait!

“Home is where the chimney smokes” is an old American saying. The smoking chimney was not a badly built fireplace but a smokestack where good factory jobs were found. The smokestacks are mostly gone now, but careers still require moving. Many of my good jobs were far away from Bountiful and both our sons found out the same truth for themselves.

Warren is now a project manager for NASA in Houston, Texas, where he, his wife Kelly and their children Laura, Walter, and Weston live.



Wayne is co-owner of a planning and architecture firm in McCall Idaho and, with wife Jenny and their two sons Willy and Dominic, enjoys living in that small, high-country resort town.



Our home in Bountiful 2009



One of my early attempts to paint in acrylics:
“Shift Change at the Tunnel” 1971



"CONSTRUCTION AND ENGINEERING IS SUCH AN IMPORTANT PART OF MY LIFE THAT I CANNOT LEAVE IT OUT OF THESE WRITINGS. SOME READERS MAY FIND IT OF GREAT INTEREST BUT I KNOW IT CAN BE DULL AND USELESS TO OTHERS WHO SHOULD JUST SKIP IT. A LARGE PORTION OF THESE MEMOIRS BETWEEN 1951 AND 1967 ARE TRANSLATIONS OF REPORTS AND LETTERS I WROTE TO FRIENDS AND FAMILY IN SWITZERLAND. THESE REPORTS AND LETTERS REFLECT MY EXPERIENCES AND THOUGHTS OF THE MOMENT WHILE TRAVELING BY MYSELF, AND LATER ON WITH MY WIFE ROMANA"